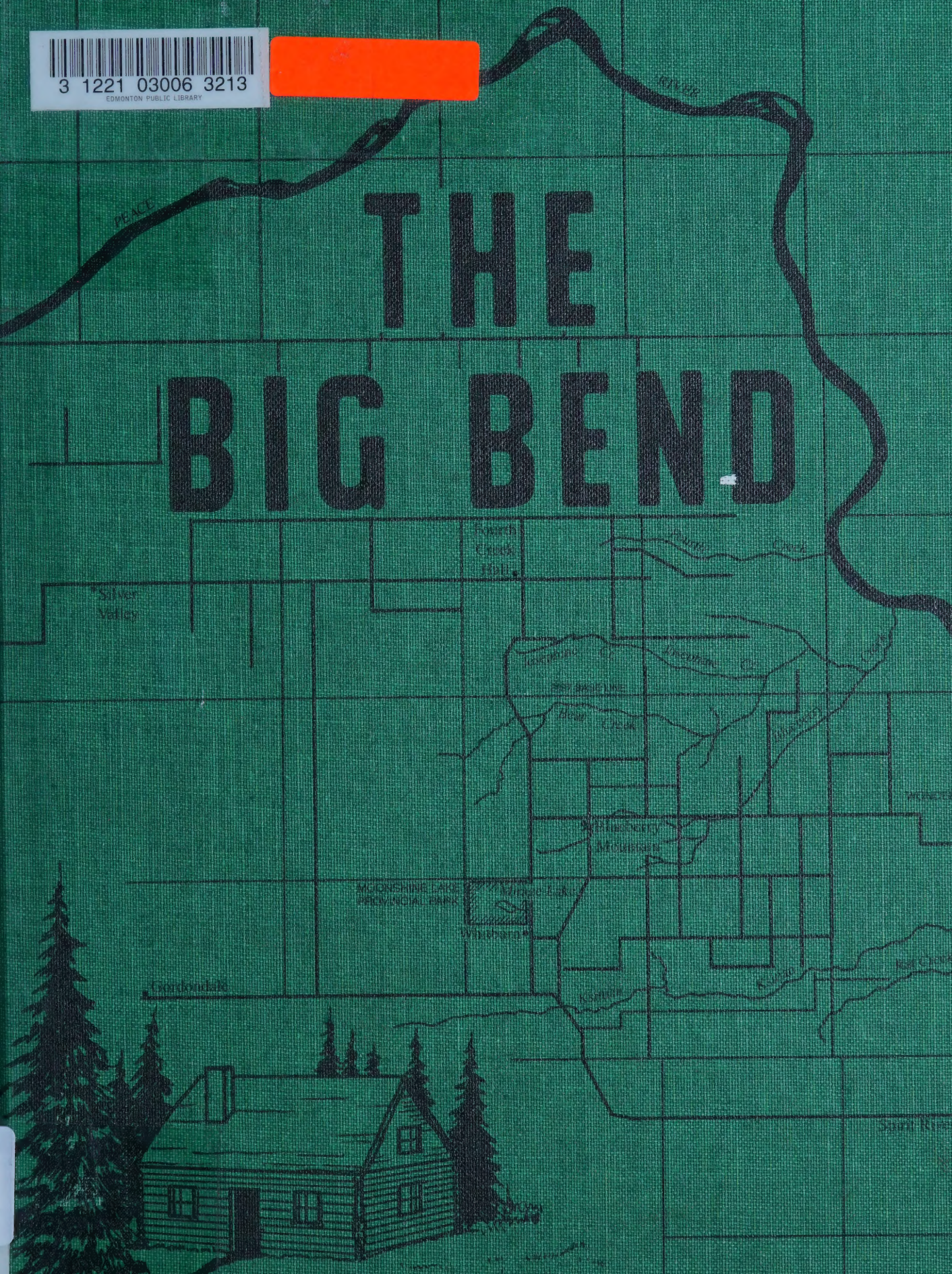




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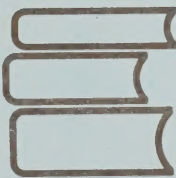
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Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the work done by all who responded to our request for stories and pictures, for without these, there would be no history of "The Big Bend", published in 1981 . . . However, we also hope you have some idea of the work involved in assembling it, and in that regard our special thanks go to Marion Thomlinson, Arletta Hampton, and Betty Ann Mitchell who did most of the typing; Pauline Parlee, Margaret Mitchell, Nettie Letersky, Marilyn Haugland, Heather and Dorothy Graham, Gwen Hagerman, and Karen Wedman, who proof read and helped in the final details; to George Esselink, Graeme Thomlinson, and Nick Letersky for map details, and to Karen Fimrite and Roger Rymhs who encouraged their pupils to research and write their family histories.

Special mention should be made of our sponsors, The Blueberry Mountain Goodwill Society; and the Big Bend Historical Committee formed specifically to foster this history.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the grants received from New Horizons, the Alberta Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Committee, and Alberta Culture.

We hope our combined efforts meet with your approval as you read "The Big Bend".

Wilma K. Bird

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the pioneers who changed the face of this particular area from a timber and parkland wilderness to a prosperous developing farming community. From the earliest settlers, the First World War Veterans, followed by the influx of hundreds of homesteaders in the early '30's, and finally the new crop of pioneers who settled the land "across the Creeks", in the Fourth Creek and Silver Valley areas, these people faced difficult conditions, depression, and isolation with good humor, persistence, and courage.

In most cases now, a younger generation farms the land, with vastly different living and working conditions. It is to be hoped that this book will help them understand and appreciate some of the tremendous effort that went into development of this heritage.

R. G. Thomlinson

Foreword

by Marion Thomlinson

This book is a history of the opening up of the country in Blueberry Mountain and surrounding area — a permanent record of our past.

Our title “The Big Bend” was chosen, as the bend in the Peace River is the boundary on the north, then Townships 79 and 80, Ranges 5-9; and Townships 81, 82 and 83, Ranges 6-11, are covered in the histories.

After World War I, the government allowed each veteran a half section of land, so the majority of the first settlers in Blueberry Mtn. were veterans. The next influx was around 1928 when the districts of Whitburn and east Blueberry were settled, Fourth Creek and Silver Valley districts weren’t opened up till a much later date, so our book also tells the stories of the newer homesteaders.

In August, 1980 a “Homecoming” was held, and at that time we had many histories and pictures on display. This was a great encouragement to the homecomers, to write up their family histories, and prompt friends and relatives to do the same. As a further incentive, prizes were given at Blueberry Creek and Silver Valley Schools for the best histories turned in by the students.

As histories came in we deemed it necessary to edit some of the material — to delete material already covered, and put events and family members in chronological order. Also, only a limited number of pictures could be used, altho’ we were happy to have so many from which to choose. We sincerely hope we have not offended anyone by doing this. There are many gaps, especially for the early years. It is very apparent that if this project had been undertaken 10, 20, or 40 years sooner, there would have been much more first hand information available. We are grateful to our older friends who were pleased to reminisce and open up a whole new vista of the past for us. Sometimes information was not available, or contact with family descendants impossible, and in such cases the personal touch was lost.

Although we have done our best to avoid errors, no doubt some have crept in — for those we apologize. If you know a different version of a story than the one printed, please bear in mind that we could only work with the material that was available to us.

For some, reading this history will be reliving the past, and will revive memories both bitter and sweet. For others, we hope it will give a better understanding of what has transpired from the first homesteader until today. In our attempt to chronicle some seventy-five years of lives, we hope we are saving some memories which would otherwise be lost. All generations from pioneer to the newest family in the area covered, have had and will continue to have a stake in this northern community.

Introduction

by Arletta Hampton

The districts mentioned in this book include such names as: Whitburn, Blueberry Mountain, Ksituan, Fourth Creek, Silver Valley and Wonderland. The area is large, taking in approximately 600 square miles, it lies north and west of the town of Spirit River, running to the Peace River. The region consists of parkland, hills, valleys and creeks. The names were chosen by the first settlers and submitted to the Post Office Department, or to the School Division, where no post office was operating. The name Blueberry Mountain came down from the Indian people who lived in the area, who used to pick blueberries along the hills. It was called Blueberry Hill but in the translation from Cree to English, the word Hill got changed to Mountain.

There were many Crees and Metis before the homesteader came, cattle were grazed in the summer of 1916, and taken back to Spirit River for the winter. While thousands of settlers were pouring into the west taking out homesteads, buying land and opening new businesses, the Peace River country was waiting in its relatively unspoiled state. Some of these settlers were the Peevers, the Milldrums and daughter Margaret (Caterer), the Howards. They held a meeting with other homesteaders, in Spirit River the summer of '18, and decided to locate in this area, coming in over old pack trails.

The following year, 1919, saw the veterans coming in and taking up land through the Soldier Settlement Board. Times were tough the first few years, log cabins had to be built, shelters for the animals, trees cut by axe and the stumps pulled out by oxen, the land broken with a walking plow.

Furniture was brought in, but some was hewn from the trees. The most important piece of furniture was a four poster bed, made to keep out the mosquitoes. Water was hauled from the creeks, until "dug-outs" were built, trap lines were operated to help supplement the farming, moose and deer were hunted for meat, the hides tanned and made into clothes, moccasins, etc.

Entertainment in the early years was held in the homes, until the hall was built. Every summer there was a Sports Day, with horse racing, ball games, etc.

As the years went by so came the improvements, tractors replacing the horse, combines replacing the thresher and the price of land going to an all time high.

Blueberry Creek

Dobish Family History

Paul and Annie Dobish with their son Nick came to Canada from the Ukraine in 1930.

They arrived in Canada June 6, 1930 by ship, which landed at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Then they travelled by train to Edmonton, Alberta.

From Edmonton they travelled to Spirit River where they took up homesteading ten miles north of the town, in the Ksituan area. In 1933 they moved a further four miles north to make their home.

It was here that two daughters and two sons were born to the family. Daughter Mary died as an infant. Daughter Lena, who was married to Mike Wawreniuk, passed away August 4, 1965. Sons John and Mike are farming in the area. Eldest son Nick resides in Edmonton. Father Paul Dobish passed away October 11, 1946.

The family encountered many hardships in taking up farming in the new land, one of which was the language problem, as they spoke only Ukrainian. Another problem was the distance that had to be travelled for supplies, and as they had no water on their land, water had to be hauled for themselves and for their livestock.

Steven Dolhan Family

Steven Dolhan, who was of Romanian descent, moved to the Blueberry Creek area from Smoky Lake on May 4, 1930, in search of homestead land.

His wife, Mary Dolhan, who was of Austrian descent, and five of their six children, Mike, Sophie, George, Charles, and Verna joined him in the fall of 1930. Later their youngest daughter Katherine was born in Yellow Creek. The move from Smoky Lake was all made by horse and buggy. A mile from their destination they ran out of bread to feed their family. Not knowing that they only had one more mile to go, they stopped and unloaded their wood stove to bake bread.

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Dolhan farmed and cleared land up until Steven's sudden death on October 14,



Steve and Mary Dolhan.

1947. Mary was widowed, with six children until her death on September 22, 1979.

Mike, the oldest of the Steven Dolhan family, married Mary Bilawchuk, and they, with their family of two, farmed in Yellow Creek until May 23, 1963. Mary Dolhan Jr. moved to Spirit River to live, and later moved to Grande Prairie.

Sophie married William Melenchuk in Smoky Lake and they moved to Yellow Creek in 1930, where they farmed until 1975. They are now retired and live in Spirit River.

George helped the family move to Yellow Creek, then later returned to Smoky Lake the latter part of 1936. He married Wasylina Starchuk in 1937 and brought her to homestead in Yellow Creek. They had seven children: five sons, Tom, David, Dan, Clifford, and Robert, and two daughters, Louise and

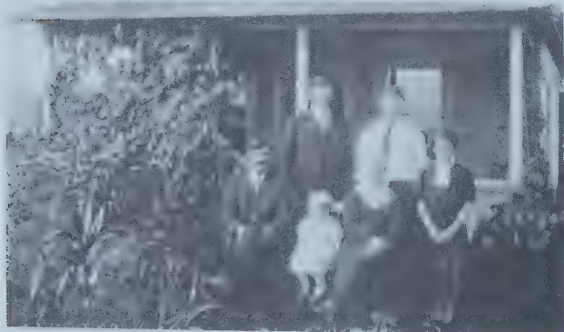


George and Wasylina Dolhan.

Theresa. Two of their sons, David and Dan are still farming in the area. David has 3 children, Dan has 4. The rest of the family are scattered around — Tom and his wife in Winnipeg, Manitoba with 4 children. Louise is Mrs. Lyle Anderson and lives at St. Paul. They have one child. Clifford, his wife and two children live in Spirit River. Robert and his wife and two children live at Sechelt, B.C., and Theresa and her husband Terry Lund, have one child and they live in Calgary.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dolhan farmed in Yellow Creek until 1959, then moved to land they bought near Spirit River. They are now retired and live in Spirit River town.

Verna married Harry Andrichiw, and they, with their family of three children farmed in the Blueberry Creek area until 1950, when they sold their land and moved to Buffalo Lakes, Alberta.



Sr. Dolhan Family.

Katherine married William Sarabin and they are farming the "Steven Dolhan Homestead".

The Dolhan family remembered the 1930's as a very hard decade, with lots of bush to clear, no roads, no water, no schools. During the winter of 1930 they experienced no snow until March 1931, when one inch blanketed the ground.

The first school was built in Ksituan, the second one in Blueberry Creek, with Yellow Creek being the third school built in the area.

They recall that somewhere between 1930 and 1940, Wheat was worth 25¢ a bushel, Oats 7¢ a bushel, Eggs 5¢ a dozen, and Butter 10¢ a pound.

Dan Dolhan is the third eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. George Dolhan. He was born in their home at Blueberry Creek and attended school at Blueberry Creek. On November 22, 1963, he married Lorraine Shmyr of Belloy, Alberta. They worked and lived in the town of Spirit River for two and a half years. In the spring of 1967 they took over farming the "George Dolhan Homestead". Their eldest daughter Wanda, and three sons, Anthony, Bowen, and Kelly are attending Blueberry Creek School at the present time. (1980)

Earl and Mary Hoover

To begin our life here in Blueberry Mountain I would have to begin in the coal mines of Drumheller. It was here I was working when a co-worker asked me to drive him to the Peace River country. I was certainly ready to take him and I prepared for the trip. On the morning we were to leave he backed out but I didn't. His idea became mine and I convinced a friend, Jim Brammer, to go north to look. We left, after some deliberation, and travelled through Edmonton, Kinuso, Peace River, Fairview, Spirit River and the end of our trail, Blueberry Mountain. The



Jim Lindsay Sr., and Grandson Jim.

roads were glare ice when we came through that day in October 1946, so we put ropes on the tires to get up and down Dunvegan Hill. We stayed overnight in Spirit River and the following morning Bill Gilligan came with us to show us the land. Needless to say we were impressed and returned to Grande Prairie where we paid \$10 to apply for homesteads. I applied for W½ 36 of township 80 range 7 west of the 6th and Jim chose the other side of the road.

In the spring of 1941 I came back after a winter in the coal mines. I wanted another look. Bill Konashuk came with me and I found my homestead two miles from where I was the year before. But no matter, the land looked good. I went back to Drumheller and during the following months decided to give up the homestead. But destiny stepped in, in the form of the Red River ice breakup. We had always had floods but the spring of 1948 left Mary and I along with our children out of a home. We lost all we had and decided to start a new life in the Peace.

Mary stayed down south until the children were out of school. She joined me in a tent for the summer months on our land. In the meantime I did some more clearing and rented a quarter from Bill Gilligan and sowed our first crop on 35 acres. We used a horse and stone boat for most everything from picking roots to going 4½ miles of bush trail to meet Jack Bird with our fuel.

Mary and the kids went to live in Spirit River in the fall and I started as a second man in a local elevator. One evening when I was away hunting, all the elevators but one burned to the ground. So began my career with Dave Ross.



Mary and Earle.

I had told a good friend, Harold Fitzsimmons, about land up here so he filed on a half also. Until he moved up I cleared and farmed his land as well as Jim's and my own. I later bought both these gentlemen's land. I did all the breaking with a 15 30 steel wheeled tractor which I had brought up from the south.



Earle and Jim Lindsay.

I grew a 20 bushel to the acre crop of wheat in the year 1949 and broke 100 more acres on Jim's. Meanwhile Mary was in town and the children were growing up — Helen was fourteen, Edith eleven, and Gordon was ten.

The winter of 1950 was very hard. Snow was six feet deep and it was -40F more often than not. A couple of men with myself took a logging contract out for Jack Bird and went to work on the George Sauder place. The whole winter's wage was \$80.

I remember on one occasion Dale DeBolt, Jim Brammer and I came into the road by team and caught a ride to town. When we got in we heard there was an oil rig making a line and they had cut a road right to Dale's house. So when we went home we borrowed Harold Fitzsimmons car and took the road. But someone was wrong and the road ran out. We were running short of fuel and we saw a cat tractor there at the road end. So Dale jumped onto it and after some minor handling problems were ironed out he drove a path from there right to his house. We gassed up and walked the cat back to return it.

Our children started going out on their own and Helen was the first. She married Jim Lindsay in February of 1951. They have seven children David, Charlene, Ronald, Brent, Craig, Danielle, and Carla. They live on the old White farm at the present.

Whenever I wasn't farming in the next few years



Earle.

you would find me a salesman for Tommy Wright's International dealership.

Edith married Ralph Jarvis in 1957 and they now reside in Happy Valley. They have six children Donald, Curtis, Mark, Darcey, Tracey, and Kim.

Gordon married Dorothy Nadeau in 1958 and they reside in Merritt, B.C. They have four children Debra, Donna, Deidre and Derek.

Harold Fizzsimmons and I joined forces and bought out the International dealer in October of 1961. We called it F & H Contractors Ltd. I was a silent partner in the business until I sold my share to Bill Waknuk a couple of years later.

The fall of 1967 saw the two boys Jim and Gordon move home and start up H & L Farms. We bought out

My Roots

by Rhonda Hrisook

John and Sophie Hrisook met in Coleman, Alta., and got married there in 1923. They had two children: William and Mary.

John worked in the coal mines for years until depression hit Alberta and times were hard. The miners were then working only two or three days a week.



Building the Barn.

In 1930 the Hrisook family moved to Spirit River, Alta., and filed on a homestead, because land was cheap. They rented a boxcar to bring their furniture, all the household goods, 4 horses, harness and wagon, and cattle. When they arrived at Spirit River, Sophie was surprised to find it was only a small village. The mud roads were terrible for travel, especially when it rained.

Sophie and the family went by wagon to Blueberry Mountain where there was a store and Post Office, and they stayed there overnight. Next morning they all got ready to get to their homestead which would take 2 or 3 days, as they had to chop down trees and make a road for the wagon to travel on. The road wasn't too bad for the first 2½ miles, but from there Sophie and the children walked home along with Tom and Anne Nikiforuk and a few friends of John's. Tom and Anne helped carry the children. It was early in April and there was lots of water, so they walked barefoot through the water, which surprisingly enough was quite warm. While Sophie and the children were trying to get home, John chased the cattle across the creeks and they got home ahead of the family.

The first house was a shack with a tar paper roof, which kept them dry. They built a barn and a log house as soon as they could.

That first summer was very wet, but the following winter was very dry and warm. There was no snow 'till March when it snowed about an inch, not enough to use the sleigh. There was all kinds of weather with rain every day or so all summer. Heavy rains would float sticks along, then it would be real warm after such storms. There were also dry years when the grain was so short it couldn't be cut with a binder. Some of the crops would just fall over from drought. Sometimes there were strong winds and the dirt would pile up in the ditches or along the fence lines. There were also forest fires that burned for years in the muskeg. The dry burnt trees would fall down in summer in the winds, and the settlers would



Hrisook Family, 1940.



Hrisook Family, 1974.

worry about them falling on the cattle and horses in the bush.

There was bush all around the homestead in the early '30's and lots of wildlife, like deer, moose, bears, and wild ducks. These were killed to keep the family in meat.

About two miles away there had been an Indian Village with teepees set up on the hill. The Indians would hunt, then smoke and dry the meat, and they would tan the hides for mocassins and clothes. Each summer they would take a trip to Peace River. They would follow the creeks, through the Hrisook yard and on to the river by wagon. They would hunt and pick wild berries, and would return to their village in a few weeks. At the present time, flint arrows that they used, can be found near the creek, and Bill also found a hunting knife.

In 1930 there wasn't much money around and people would barter among themselves for goods they wanted or needed. For example; one pound of cabbage would get you one pound of pork. Eggs were 5¢ a dozen if you were lucky enough to be able to sell. Sometimes they couldn't even be given away. Hogs were worth \$2.00 or \$2.50 each, and it didn't even pay to ship cows as the freight was more than the value of the cow. Hogs sold at 13½¢ a pound, and baby pigs were sold at 50¢ each. Horses were worth lots of money — \$75.00 to \$125.00 each. If a person was short of potatoes he would work one day for a bag of potatoes. Oats sold for five or six cents a bushel. Cleaned wheat for seed cost 45¢ a bushel, but wheat sold to the elevator brought 17¢ a bushel. Tea cost 40¢ to 45¢ a pound. Cows sold at \$10.00 each, and calves at \$6.00 each. Flour cost \$2.00 to \$2.50

for 100 lbs., and bread was 10¢ a loaf. Rough lumber was \$8.00 a thousand. Soap was cheap — 5 bars for 25¢. Ladies' dress shoes were \$1.98 per pair, and for two or three dollars a nice dress could be bought.

When cashing a cheque, a 3¢ to 6¢ stamp had to be attached. Letters took from one to three cents, and in the early days it was hard to find the few cents for letters.

For a few years there was no school near the Hrisook family. The first was Ksituan, then later there was Blueberry Creek. The school was built of logs around 1934. Bill and Mary Hrisook went to Blueberry Creek School for about two years. The teacher was Mr. Charles Knight. He had a hard time with the students as most of them spoke Ukrainian. After a few months the students were told they would be punished if they didn't speak English, as the teacher felt they didn't want to learn. Later on the Blueberry Creek School burned down, but it was quickly rebuilt.

After two years at Blueberry Creek School, the Hrisooks attended a new school at Yellow Creek which was closer to home. Mr. Ed Rockerts was the teacher there, and the school covered Grades 1-7. Yellow Creek School was in operation about 1936. The teachers' wages were about \$25.00 a month. For a few years the teachers boarded at Victor Almans, then at John and Sophie Hrisooks for six years or so. Room and Board was \$12.50 a month and up.

Christmas Concerts were a highlight in the old days and were held at night. The first Blueberry Mountain School was built on the roadway, and it was also used for dances. Later it was moved, and later on Yellow Creek School was closed. Blueberry Creek became the centralized school for the area, and in the 1960's the High School Students were bussed to Spirit River. Centralization resulted in good gravelled roads.

For entertainment in the old days there were dances, box socials, card games, picnics, barn



J. Hrisook and Binder.

dances, and neighbors visiting each other on long winter evenings. Before the roads were gravelled the early settlers had some long miserable trips. When John Hrisook had his leg broken he had to be taken to Spirit River in a wagon — a long painful ride over the rough roads. The family walked to town to visit him, and it would be late at night before they got home and still had chores to do.

In the 1940's things got better. There was more land cleared and there were some tractors used for breaking the land. Grain was a better price when World War II was on. People all got radios and could listen to world news, good music and stories.

When the Americans came north to build the Alaska Highway, there were lots of jobs. Most of the men in the area left for jobs north of Dawson Creek. The pay was good at that time: Carpenter's Helpers got 75¢ an hour. With extra money there were soon a few trucks and cars around. The first truck in the area was either Bill Kushneryk's or Bill Melenchuk's, and the time it took to get to town was shortened a lot.

Bill Kushneryk would take a truckload of people out to pick berries in the summer, and soon, between 1940 and 1945, a new road was built across the creeks. The first car to go across belonged to Bill and Sophie Melenchuk, but when a truck with a load of wheat tried it, the road was so narrow that the truck rolled down the creek bank. No one was hurt, but the bears fed on wheat for months.

Times were better and more people got vehicles. Bill and Bruno would hunt rabbits and get from 60 to 75 a day. The skins were worth from 6¢ to 8¢ each, and the meat was fed to the pigs. That spring the pigs would eat any chickens they could corner in the pig pen.

It was a sad time for the Hrisook family when Sophie got sick with diabetes and was rushed to Edmonton General Hospital. She had her leg amputated and stayed at the hospital for three months. The family made a few trips to see her. The hospital room was about \$3.50 a day in 1945. Later on Sophie got an artificial leg. She had to learn to walk again. It was hard going and she fell a lot, sometimes hurting herself. (In 1950 they built a new house.) About eleven years later, in 1956 Sophie had to have her other leg amputated. After a few months she came home, and learned to manage very well in a wheelchair. She used the wheelchair for about four years before she passed away. The hospital rooms were about \$8.25 a day by 1956.

After World War II there were fewer horses used and the farmers used tractors for their field work. Life was better for people in the farming communities.

Mary Hrisook and Peter Kushneryk were mar-



Teams at Threshing.

ried. They had a big wedding. In those days weddings were always a big 'DO'. They had three children: Betty, Ken and Ron.

Bill Hrisook and Lily Krysta were married in 1952 and that year went for a trip to Vancouver, B.C. It was really something for them to see — everything so green the flowers so beautiful, the ships in the harbor, and all kinds of roses growing on the fences. They came home by the Hart Highway, which was under construction at the time. They had to detour in some places and the water was up to the doors of the car. They managed to get through, with mud and water flying. They had three children: Darlene, Randy and Rhonda.

Darlene 1952 — Began school at Blueberry Creek and finished High School at Spirit River. She worked one year at the Royal Bank in Spirit River, then went to Calgary and attended Mount Royal College and University. She is now working in Calgary as District Recreation Supervisor, Center East Area.

Randy 1955 — Began school at Blueberry Creek and finished High School at Spirit River. He worked a few months for the Alberta Wheat Pool at Buick Creek, B.C., then changed jobs and worked on the rigs for five years. Now Randy is working for Amoco Canada Petroleum Co. Ltd., Edmonton District, as Drilling Foreman and travels a lot. He was in Ontario last summer.

1967 — Canada's Birthday, Centennial Year. The Hrisooks had a lot of happy days, as well as a few sad times. Their Centennial Project was that they got a motor boat, water skis, and best of all Rhonda was born.

Rhonda, the youngest member of the family is attending Blueberry Creek School. She likes pets. Has a dog Rex, has cats, and has goldfish. She hopes to go to College later.

Many stories have been told of the old days, one being a story about Bill Melenchuk and a friend. They were coming home from Spirit River, and since it was getting dark they decided to spend the night at the stopping place at Cache One. They had no lantern so Bill's friend tore some material from the leg of his

pants, twisted it to make a wick and put it in lard and lit it. Next morning they watered the horses in the creek and left for home. They used four horses to pull a loaded wagon up Rankin Hill and got as far as what is now the Jack Bird Lake by noon.

Another is about John and Bill Hrisook. They went to the show in Spirit River. They had an old car and were bringing home a few boxes of salt pork after the show. On the way home the tie rod end broke and the car rolled into the ditch, with the salt pork flying around inside the car. When things settled down Bill said "Open the Door." "I can't" said John, "the door is above me." They pushed and pulled and finally got the door open and got out. Later they got the car out of the ditch, tied the end with wire and managed to drive slowly home.

Bill Hrisook and his friend Peter Kushneryk would visit each other as boys. The Hrisooks had a great big boar that would go along the path by the creek to Kushneryks. One day the boys decided to have a ride on it. The boar didn't mind for a while but once he got tired he would head for the biggest willows he could find to knock the boys off his back. This happened a few times and later the boys would ride part of the way and walk the rest of the way. This way everybody was happy as the boar didn't have to brush them off any more.

We Hrisooks had a pet squirrel named Cocoa. which we fed sunflower seeds and peanuts. One day we had company and brought the squirrel into the house to show him off. He ran around the kitchen cupboards, table, and chairs. He would also run up the pant legs. The ladies were wearing skirts and up went Cocoa. Such confusion — screaming, laughing, and dancing around, holding skirts down to keep the squirrel out.

Just a small look at old days.

Joseph Kozenko Family by Lorene Sopko

Sophie Kozenko was born in Orbaka, Manitoba, June 13, 1908. When she was five years old she and her family moved to Samburg, Saskatchewan. There they farmed with a wagon, two Indian ponies, a democrat, two work horses and 12 head of cattle. At age 13 she started school, but classes shut down in the winter because of the cold so she went for only three years.

Sophie was married in 1924 at the age of 16, to Joseph Kozenko. Joe was born in Poland October 26, 1901. As a child he and his family moved to Melfort, Sask. Joe and Sophie met after he moved in with his sister at Strongpine (2 miles from Samburg). This is where they lived after they were married, and their oldest daughter Mary was born there. She now lives

in Surrey, B.C. with husband Jack Weirz. Johnny was also born there. He passed away in 1942, during the second World War, in an explosion at Dawson Creek, B.C.

After three years of marriage they moved to Joseph's homestead at Whitburn. Olga, Matt, and Edna were born here. Olga lives in Medicine Hat with husband Harold Chambers. Matt now lives in Edmonton. Edna lives in Devon with husband Lawrence Breyde and family.

Five years later they sold the Whitburn homestead and moved to Yellow Creek, where they lived on Sophie's homestead. They leased another quarter, and after doing some breaking Joseph got title to it. Betty, Katherine, Ann, William and Janet were all born here. Betty farms near Spirit River with husband Pete Bondar and family. Katherine lives in Spruce Grove with her husband Bill Hudema and girls. William lives in Grande Prairie with his wife Gloria and family. Janet now lives in Emonton with her boys.

They had six horses which were used to work the fields, and they also had cows and chickens. Sophie had a garden, and she also sold cream at Spirit River. There was no electricity at that time, so no refrigerator, and she dried fruits, fish, and mushrooms, and also canned milk and made jams. After the war they got a little tractor which helped ease the work. Three years later they got a pull type combine, then sold all but two horses and bought a John Deere tractor. They also had a bright green '48 one-ton Ford with black fenders.

In 1950 Joseph died of a heart attack. Sophie lived on the farm for another year, then moved to Spirit River. She bought a 2 room house; and four years later, after selling the homestead at Yellow Creek she was able to build on another three rooms. Later she sold the other quarter. There was a little trouble, since the homestead had been in her name, but the other quarter in Joseph's name.

While in Spirit River she did some baby sitting, mostly for doctors, nurses and teachers, to make a little extra money. Sophie still lives in Spirit River and keeps herself quite busy. In summer she has a garden and all types of flowers, as well as having a lot of houseplants. She has 28 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren, to whom she has given much of the beautiful needlework she does.

Kucharuk Family by granddaughter, Judy Machtans

The Gregor Kucharuk family, (wife Mary, three sons, Steve 9 yrs old, Walter, Jack, and daughter Anne) and Gregory's sister, Helen, with their belong-

ings left the village of Dominka, in the province of Volin, Ukraine. From Danzak (Gedansk) to England and on to Halifax, Canada by ship, Pacific Line. Some of the family were very sea sick, except Jack, he ate for everyone who couldn't. On arrival in Halifax, they boarded a train to Edmonton, Alberta, and then to Rycroft, Alberta, arriving in June, 1929.

The entire trip took six weeks from Gedansk to Rycroft. The greatest problem encountered on the trip was the language barrier. The customs and life style were hard to adjust to also. They left the homeland of Ukraine, due to lack of freedom and for betterment of the family. Arriving in Rycroft, a few days were spent at the home of Demko Shmyr. Then they took all their belongings, axe, sickle, lantern, scythe, dishes, water kettle, bedding and dried fruits, and travelled by horse to Volin, to stay with Mary's brother Moses Machuk, who had arrived in Canada the year before.



G. Kucharek Family, 1928.

Gregory filed on a homestead in June 1929, NW 28, two miles from the banks of the Peace River, where they walked to go fishing. They cleared some land, heavy green timber, and built a 1½ storey house. In order to purchase their first cow, Gregory worked for the Lazoruk family and was paid \$65.00. A native Cree Indian, John Thomas, supplied the family with fresh moose meat and moccasins for all the children, in return the Thomas family got fresh milk. In 1930, Gregory supervised the building of the first school in Volin, with the help of the community residents. Another child arrived in 1931, daughter Nettie. In the fall of 1931 Gregory died at the age of 31, of injuries sustained at the beginning of '31.

Mary Kucharuk then married Matt Bilawchuk in the spring of 1933, and moved north of Spirit River to the Devale district, NE 30-79-6-6. In 1937 Steve, now old enough to file for a homestead, did so. The



Klaus, Judy Kucharek, Kenton, Craig and Sheldon Machtans.

land was covered with large trees and windfalls. In 1939, Steve purchased his first car, a Chevy, with his step-brother, George. In 1942 Steve joined the Army and was stationed in Vancouver, Point Atkinson, etc.

In 1943 Steve Kucharuk married Kate Symchuk, and they lived in Vancouver and Prince Rupert, while serving in the army. In 1945 a daughter Judy was born. Steve was discharged from the army in 1946 and returned to farming. He bought his first tractor in 1947, a model 25 Massey Harris. In 1948 they built a 1½ storey house, on his homestead. Judy attended school at Yellow Creek and then Blueberry Creek, graduating from Spirit River High in 1962. In 1965 she was married to Klaus Machtans, and made their first home in Vancouver, B.C. They have three sons, Kenton born April, 1967, Craig born Feb. 1969, and Sheldon in 1973.



Steve, Kate and daughter Judy, 1980.

In September 1974, Klaus, Judy and family moved to Steve's homestead to start farming. Steve and Kate moved into Spirit River. Though Steve is retired, he still returns to the farm to help out with the farming when needed.

The Kushneryk (Hrisook) Family

by Mary Kushneryk

My dad John Hrisook immigrated to Canada in 1913 from White Russia to the small mining town of Coleman, Alberta in the Crows Nest Pass, where he worked in a coal mine for many years. In 1922 my mother, a young girl of eighteen from Czechoslovakia, also came to Coleman and met dad. In August 1923 they were married there, and Dad continued working in the mine. Things were pretty good then. In 1924 their first child was born, my brother Bill, who is still farming in this community. I was born three years later in March 1927, and our family continued living there. Dad and Mom managed to keep a cow, and a bull, some chickens and at last got some horses. By the spring of 1930 things were not looking so good. The depression was around the corner, coal mines were closing down, and no jobs in sight.

My dad heard of the Peace River Country and decided to come out here. Dad, Alex Cot, and John

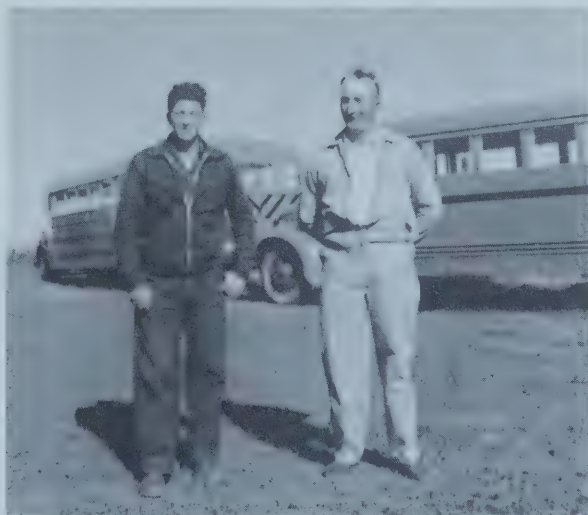
Loshko packed their bags and left for Spirit River, to file on homesteads. When they got to Spirit River there was no road across the creeks to Blueberry Creek, except through Blueberry Mountain, which was a distance of 40 miles. This was too far for them to walk, so they took a short cut across the creeks marking trees with their axes. They each picked a quarter of land that they later filed on. It cost only \$5 to file on a quarter section of land. They built a small shack of logs, then they went back to Coleman.

At the end of April 1930 they loaded a box car with their belongings, also the horses, cow, bull, and chickens, and headed for the Peace River Country. My mother, my brother and I came at that time and I was only three years old. John Loshko, Alex Cot, also Tom and Annie Nikiforuk who had filed on homesteads here, came with us.

When we got to Spirit River the men unloaded everything into a wagon, hitched the horses up, and started out through what they called "Cache One" to Blueberry Mountain. The trip took four days as the roads were very bad. Water was all over the place. Our first stop was at "Cache One" near where the old railroad bridge stood on the route from Spirit River to Pouce Coupe. The next night we all stayed overnight near Blueberry, and the third at Bateman's, where Bill Lindsay once lived, and at last Earl Hoover. The trip was very hard, and the horses were extremely tired as the load was heavy. Stops were very necessary to feed horses and rest up. Most of the men walked behind the wagon to make it easier for the horses. I remember Annie Nikiforuk telling me she walked behind the wagon most of the way. My mother walked some and rode some, as she had to stay with my brother and me in the wagon as we were too young to walk.



J. Hrisooks with Bill and Mary Kushneryk.



First school bus drivers, 1956. Pete and Jim Lightfoot.

When we finally arrived at the homesteads the hard life began. The men cleared land with an axe and broke it with a breaking plow and eight horses. For heat we used an airtight heater, a cast iron wood stove, and for lights a coal oil lamp. By next spring Mother managed to plant a garden, and that helped. There were always plenty of wild fruits, saskatoons, raspberries, dewberries, and wild gooseberries. From rose hips my mother made vinegar, and she also made jam from carrots. Dad dug a well by hand, and mother used to lower the milk in a cream can down the well with a rope during summer. It kept cold there, and from the cream she made butter.

Later on they built a bigger house, and mother plastered it with mud and straw, then later white-washed it inside. Our chicken coop was made of logs and plastered with mud or a mixture of horse manure and mud.

There were no schools close. The closest one was Blueberry Mtn., and that was too far for us to go. About 1934 the first Blueberry Creek School was built and we started going, a distance of 3½ miles. Our first teacher was Mr. Knight. Very few of the children could read or write, and only a few children could speak English. This made it very hard for our teacher. The majority of the children were of Ukrainian descent and couldn't speak a word of English.

As time went on the children gradually learned their a,b,c's and soon started reading and writing. I'll never forget the first song we learned at school. This is the way it went:

"Good Morning to you
Good Morning to you
Whatever the weather,
We'll all be together.
For this is the way
We start a new day."



Pete, Mary and family Betty, Ken and Ron.

The school was one room, built of hewn logs, with moss filling the cracks. We had a long heater in which we burned long pieces of cord wood. The older boys and girls had to help bring in the wood and keep the fire going. In winter, snow was melted in pails on the heater. There were outdoor toilets then.

I remember the first year at school. Just before Christmas the Salvation Army brought a big box of clothing to school, and Mr. Knight distributed the mitts, socks, scarves, sweaters, jackets, pants, toques, etc. among the children. We were all so happy to get something, as our parents could not afford to buy too much.

Acre by acre the parents managed to clear some land and seed grain. With that little bit of grain they could buy very little, as wheat was worth about 25 cents a bushel. This grain had to be hauled to town with a team of horses, a distance of 35 miles, so the trip took two days. During the winter months the horses had to be shod (horseshoes had to be put on so they wouldn't slip on ice).

The first Post Office was at Blueberry Mtn., so we had nine miles to go to get our mail. The Post Office was operated by Mr. Milldrum. The first store was also at Blueberry Mtn., owned by Nick Baduik, later by McCormicks, then McCluskeys, then Jack Bird. We always drove by team to Blueberry to buy groceries, a distance of 9½ miles.

In 1935 John and Dora Waknuk opened a Post Office at Ksituan, only 4½ miles from our place, so we got our mail there. His trips were made with horses and a buggy in spring and summer, and with a sleigh and caboose in the winter. It was a long route as he hauled the Ksituan, Blueberry Mtn., Whitburn, and Gordondale mail. Another mailman would meet him at Whitburn and take the mail from Whitburn to Gordondale. All this mail was picked up at Spirit River, and this was always a two day trip. Usually, late Friday or Saturday we would go and get our mail at Waknuk's. Lots of times we picked up the mail for neighbors, the Symchuks, Nikiforuks, Wawrenuiks.



Hauling Pulpwood.

Next time they would go and would bring ours. People ordered a lot from Simpsons and Eatons, so there was always something to carry on your back in a sack, especially in the spring when the roads were under water. Dora and John Waknuk operated the Post Office from 1935 to 1964, twenty-nine years in all.

The first radio in our area was bought by K. Pronyshyn. There was a lot of excitement, and most of the neighbors gathered there and listened. My parents brought with them from Coleman a gramophone with a lot of records, so neighbors would gather and play records for entertainment. Annie Nikiforuk brought a mandolin from Coleman which she played very well. On Saturday nights she would play her instrument at her little house, and the few neighbors would gather to dance, sing and have a real nice time.

After going to Blueberry Creek School for two years over muddy roads, sloughs, through thick bush and heavy snow in winter, a distance of 3 miles walking, Yellow Creek School was opened and we went there. Our teacher now was Edward Rockarts. This time we only had 2½ miles to walk. At first our teacher boarded at Victor Almonds, then later at our place. He paid \$20 a month for board and room. His wages were around \$60 a month, and at the end of the month the local school had no money to pay him so there was always a waiting period.

For games at school we played "Hide and Seek", London Bridge, Bear and Deer, and also had a lot of Spelling Matches, which really helped us with our school work. Every evening for about two hours our teacher would correct children's papers and prepare work for next day. Of course in winter this was done by the light of a coal oil lamp.

As more and more people kept coming in to the district we had more children at school. In 1937 we got the Bill Kushneryk family. One boy Peter, (my husband now) and his four sisters. Bill Kushneryk emigrated to Canada from Austria in 1904 with his parents, to Wakaw, Saskatchewan when he was a very small boy. He worked all through Saskatchewan and Montana during the depression, (lots of times just for room and board). In 1922 he met Peter's mom Jean and they were married in Cudworth, Saskatchewan. Peter, my husband now, was born in Cudworth in March 1923, and when just an infant they moved to Greenway, just northeast of Rycroft where they started farming. As years went by, all his sisters were born in Rycroft, and attended school at Greenway. In 1937 they moved across the creeks to Yellow Creek. They lived only a mile from our place so we walked to school together.

Edward Rockarts our teacher, now had about 48

kids to teach. He taught at Yellow Creek for about seven years and we had some wonderful Christmas Concerts. We got our parts to study about the middle of November, and everyone worked hard. We devoted our recess and noon hour to practising our plays and singing carols. About a week before our concert the older boys and girls built a stage out of boards, planks and blocks. The girls brought sheets and pins for curtains. Our costumes were all hand made. We used charcoal to color our faces when we had a negro play, and we had lots of those. On concert evening our school would be packed with people. Extra benches were made from planks and blocks, and the desks were all used. When the concert was over Santa would give out candy bags and all kids exchanged gifts in the range of 25 to 50 cents, and they were really nice. After all this, there would be a dance with free music supplied by the local homesteaders. The ladies brought lunch — cakes and sandwiches, and they were served free. Coffee was made in cream cans on top of the heater, by some ladies of the community.

In 1939 the war broke out, and young men were drafted into service. Edward Rockarts left to teach elsewhere and we got young Normalities to teach (they were young boys and girls out of Normal School who were going into the teaching profession). They were wonderful too. In about 1940 quite a few young boys were drafted into the service, and there would be farewell dances for them. In those days, admission was 25 cents for gents, and ladies brought lunch. Music was supplied by local fellows for a few dollars each. The musicians were usually the Solomiany's and the Juzwishin's. The Yanishewski Orchestra came in later years.

It was in the forties the American Army came to Dawson Creek, then there was the Dawson Creek explosion. Many young girls from our area went to work in Dawson Creek as it was booming then. Many married Americans and left for the States. One of my girl friends started working in a cafe for \$25 a month, which was considered a good wage then.

In the early forties there were a few cars and trucks around. Bill and Sophie Melenchuk bought a truck, and my husband's dad Bill Kushneryk also got a truck. People would hire them to haul grain or cattle to town. Of course the short cut across the creeks to Spirit River was made, and that made the trip much shorter.

About the end of 1942 Peter and I started getting interested in each other more and more, although we had known each other since they moved here from Rycroft. We were friends and neighbors, played together many many times, and went to school together for a few years. On June 22nd 1945 Pete and I were

married in Westminster United Church, Spirit River by Rev. George Spady, whom I hear still resides in Edmonton. We lived for a few years with my parents and farmed one quarter of land.

During winter Peter drove a truck for Sanduls Transfer for extra money, and in the summer he farmed with an Allis Chalmers cat. In spare time he worked for Public Works, now Department of Highways, with his Cat. His wage was \$3.25 per hour, which was considered good in those days. My brother and Pete bought a threshing machine together and a binder was pulled by a Ford tractor by this time, which made it much easier than horses. On Oct. 14th, 1947 our first child was born, a girl we named Elizabeth (Betty for short). We still lived with my parents, and Pete would work out every winter. One winter Pete and my brother cut pulpwood and hauled it into Spirit River from Blueberry, as they each had a truck. Things were getting more modern. Pretty soon the horses at the threshing machine were replaced by a stook sweep mounted in front of a Ford tractor. One man could do the job of hauling the bundles to the machine instead of using horses, hay racks, and men. Usually we managed by ourselves, as by now my brother was married. His wife and I, my brother, Peter and my dad, did the harvesting while my mother cooked the meals and looked after our little daughter.

In 1951 Peter bought another quarter of land from Harry Andruchiw, and the following spring we moved there. A year later Pete and my brother traded the threshing machine for a Cockshutt Combine. Mike Skoworodko was a Cockshutt dealer in Spirit River then. More and more combines were seen on the fields each year and threshing machines were very rare.

The fall of 1953 our daughter, then 6 years old, started school at Blueberry Creek. We lived 3 miles from school. It was a long walk for a little girl, but she always had the George Dolhan kids for company. There were Tom, David, Dan and Louise. When it got real cold, George would take the children to school with a sleigh and a team of horses. They had to bundle up well, and even wrap themselves in quilts.

On February 3, 1954 our second child was born. We named him Ken. In those days we had a district nurse stationed at Blueberry Mtn., and we either took our children there or the nurse came out to the home when someone was sick. Those nurses went through some real rough times too. I recall the first nurse coming out to Yellow Creek School about 1936. Her name was Miss Sage. Bob Hewitt brought her in a sleigh and caboose, with a team of horses with bells on the harness. Some of the nurses I can remember were Miss Routledge, Mrs. Gunn (now Mrs. Bird),

and Miss Ferrier. They were wonderful, and devoted a lot of their time to the people of this community, going from school to school regardless of the weather. They did all the inoculating and vaccinating.

In the fall of 1957 school buses made their first runs at the Blueberry Creek School. My husband Peter drove one and Jim Lightfoot drove the other. Times were changing fast. Peter and Jim had a lot of bad roads to drive over, as the roads were not yet gravelled at that time.

On March 10th, 1957 our third child Ron was born. Times were getting better. We already had power, and telephones were coming in shortly. Jobs were easier to get and wages were getting better. Peter only drove the school bus for two or three years as it was too hard to harvest and drive the bus. George Dolhan then took over the school bus route.

As years passed, all our children went to Blueberry Creek School and later to Spirit River. After graduation Betty, our daughter, worked at the Treasury Branch in Spirit River, and then at the Drug Store. In 1967 she met Del. McCorriston, an R.C.M.P. who was then stationed at Spirit River. On June 14, 1968 they were married and transferred to Blairmore, Alberta where they stayed for almost five years. Their son Dwayne was born while they were in Blairmore. Next they moved to Didsbury for a little over four years, and then to Westlock where they bought a home and they have been there for three years now. Del is still with the R.C.M.P. as Corporal. Betty is working part time in a drug store and their son Dwayne, our only grandchild, is in grade six at school.

Ken, after graduating, was employed for a short time at Proctor and Gamble, then worked on oil rigs for several years. He became a driller for the past two years. In August 1975 he married a local girl, Diane Yanishevski who has been employed at the Spirit River School Division for several years now. Ken and Diane made their home in Spirit River. Ken farms in summer and hauls water on rigs during the winter.

Ron, our youngest, is still single, has worked on oil rigs for a few years now and has become a driller. He helps us with farming during spring, summer, and harvest, and works on oil rigs during the winter. It was exactly 50 years last April that I arrived in this community with my parents. There were the good times and the bad ones which I will never forget.

Kutrowski Family History

Mike Kutrowski was born in 1898 in Badski, Poland, where he married Tekla. They had four children when they emigrated to Canada in the fall of

1929. When they settled in Canada they raised three more children.

Language: Their only language was Ukrainian. They had all roots in Russia when they came to Canada, but they put down new roots again in the Blueberry Creek area. They are of the Greek Orthodox religion.

Why Parents Came: They came to Canada because they did not like the government. It was also hard to make money, hard to get work, and they could not own any property. They felt that coming to Canada would allow them freedom, which it did.

Conditions Met: The conditions facing them in Canada were — lots of bush to clear, trails to make, flies, hunger, and hard times to cope with. They were very poor, and took a homestead in the Blueberry Creek area. They built themselves a log shack, then they cut brush and worked hard to clear land. They stayed with neighbors and relatives till they got the house built. After that they kept on working and raising livestock to build up their farm. There were no schools when they first homesteaded, so the family got very little education.

One Difficulty Encountered: Work was hard to find in order to make any money, and people had to go elsewhere to find work. John Kutrowski went to work in Hope, British Columbia. He was killed in 1946 when a bucket fell off a cat where he was working. The bucket fell on him and crushed him.

One Pleasure Encountered: One pleasure encountered was when they made moonshine and didn't let anybody know. The pleasure of this was to make it in a little log shack where nobody would see. It would be fun to drink it when it was done. It was a pleasure to have this treat, because they felt it took their minds off other things.

Growth Of The Family: Bill Kutrowski married Anne Sidor of Wonderland and raised four children. They farm in the Blueberry Creek area. John Kutrowski was killed in an accident in 1946. Nick Kutrowski married Irene Beaudoin of Tangent and raised two children. They farm in the Blueberry Creek area. Nettie Kutrowski married Sam Kobylanski of Rycroft and raised five children. Sam and Nettie are now retired and live in Rycroft. Mary Kutrowski married Bill Skoworodko of Blueberry Creek and raised four children. They now live in Grande Prairie. Rose Kutrowski married Albert Hannas of Rycroft and raised seven children. They farm in the Rycroft area. Mike Kutrowski died in 1965 in Spirit River Hospital. Tekla Kutrowski died in 1948 in Spirit River Hospital.

The Tom Nikiforuk Family by Marion (Nikiforuk) Skoworodko

Tom Nikiforuk was born in Zawale, Sniatyn, Austria on May 5, 1900. He had one sister and three brothers, who stayed in Austria. He arrived in Halifax on May 23, 1913 with his second cousin Alex Nikiforuk and family, and settled in Edmonton. Later that year his dad Gregory joined him, with hopes of bringing the rest of the family to Canada. However, the first World War was on its way and Gregory could not return to Austria until the war ended in 1918. He did go back to Austria then, and Tom never saw any members of his family again.

Tom worked at whatever jobs he could find until he was sixteen years old, then went to work in the coal mines. He worked as a coal miner in Luscar, Cadomin and Pocahontas near Jasper, Alberta, until 1924. He then moved to Coleman, a coal mining town in southern Alberta.

Later he met my mother Ann Myers, and they were married on July 7, 1928 in Coleman. Ann was born and grew up in Coleman and she attended school there. Her parents came to Canada from Czechoslovakia. They too, met and were married in Coleman, and raised a family of four, two boys and two girls.

Tom continued to work in the mines until April 1930, but with less demand for coal, the mines were closing down and miners were laid off work. At that



Marion, Tommy and Willie.



Miners ready to enter the mine.

time Mom and Dad got an urge to go homesteading, so moved to the Peace River Country. They arrived in Spirit River on April 24, 1930 with their belongings and a pregnant dog called Tina. Travelling with them were friends John and Sophie Hrisook, and their two children Bill and Mary, also Alex Cot. That first night was spent in the immigration house operated by Steve Keay.

Next morning John Hrisook and his hired man took the short cut, (a bush trail through the Rat and Ksituan Creeks) herding John's cattle to his homestead. Tom, driving one team of horses, and Alex Cot driving another, took the families and their belongings through the Blueberry Mtn. road. That night was spent camping at Cache One as it was called then, about 12 miles west of Spirit River on the #49 highway. The coyotes and owls supplied them with music all night, and they could not be turned off either. Next evening they arrived at Blueberry Mtn., which had only a Post office at that time. Mr. Milldrum was the Postmaster. Mrs. Milldrum fed the crew and put them up for the night. Next day they only travelled three miles to the Bateman place, and that night was spent with the Batemans. In the morning Mom and Dad were missing their dog. After some searching she was found with seven pups under a granary, all healthy and ready for the rest of the journey.

Mr. Steve Gill, one of the homesteaders, guided this wagon train to Nick Skoworodko's place. The

rest of the journey to John Hrisook's was even harder, as everyone was getting tired, and much of the trail had to have the bush cut before the wagons could travel. They finally arrived at the Hrisook homestead late that night. John Hrisook had previously spent a couple of months on his homestead and had a log cabin built.

Next morning Mom and Dad walked to their homestead a half mile away. Mom said she looked around and all she could see was bush and more bush. She sat on an old fallen tree and cried, and asked Dad "How are we ever going to make a home in this wilderness?" The Hrisooks had Mom and Dad live with them until they built a log cabin on their own homestead, NW 12-80-7-W.6 at Blueberry Creek.

Dad worked for the Blueberry Mtn. farmers for the first few years, and in return for his work got a horse. Our neighbors, Mr. Symchuk and John Thomas each had one horse as well, and by putting the three horses together they each got their land worked.

In August of 1932 Dad and Mr. Symchuk beat the freight trains to Saskatchewan to look for work. The farmers there were better established and the two men were hired for extra help that was needed during harvest time. After harvest, he returned to his homestead and the hard work of clearing his land. From 1930 to 1940 they managed to clear approximately 8-10 acres per year.

In 1935 the farmers' wives were allowed to file on their own homestead, so Mom filed on NW 16-80-6-W.6, three and a half miles away. This gave the Nikiforuks a half section of land, nearly all bush. In 1945 Mom sold her homestead and bought the SW 13-80-6-W.6, which was next to Dad's.

In 1941 Mom was taken ill, and was in the Spirit River Hospital twice for two week periods. Needless to say she was sadly missed at home, but the neighbors, Nick Skoworodko's mother, Mrs. Lena Dolhan and Mrs. Hrisook were most helpful — washing clothes and baking bread for us. One thing that stands out in my mind, was my first trip to Spirit River alone. I was nine years old at the time, and one day Dad drew a map for me, and I set out on horseback for Spirit River to visit my mother, a distance of about 18 miles. I returned home that same night, and Dad was certainly happy to see me, bringing home the good news that mother was improving and would soon be home.

As with all other farmers, things got easier as the years went by and the family was able to help with the work. We hired cats to do the clearing and breaking, but there were many roots to be picked by hand.

Dad died in November of 1958 and was buried in the Spirit River Cemetery. Mother stayed on the farm for four years, and then moved to Spirit River. She was employed as a cook at the Pleasant View Lodge for 15 years and is now retired. She enjoys gardening, knitting, crocheting, quilting, and travelling, also plays her mandolin for her own enjoyment. She owns her home in Spirit River.

Mom and Dad always said they were blessed with three children. I, Marion, born in 1931, Tom Jr. born in 1933 and Willie born in 1936. We all attended the Blueberry Creek School.

I, Marion was married in 1948 to John Skoworodko and we lived on the farm at Rycroft for seven years, where we had two children; Kenneth and Lorraine. We then moved to Spirit River in 1955, but retained the farm at Rycroft. John always did trucking and continued in that as well as looking after the farm. Ken and Lorraine both took their schooling at Spirit River. Ken went to U. of A. and graduated as a Mechanical Engineer in 1973. In June of 1979 he married Anna Kaarsemaker of Drayton Valley, a University graduate in Physio Therapy. They have one son Gregory, and they presently live in Red Deer, Alta., where Ken is employed by Schlumberger Oil Company.'

Lorraine took her nurses training at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton and got her R.N. in 1976. She is now living in Calgary and is nursing at the Foothills Hospital there.

Tom Nikiforuk married Nina Ciura from Codesa in 1962 and lived on one of the original quarter sections with the original home on it at Blueberry Creek. They had two daughters Barbara and Valerie who started school at Blueberry Creek. Tom died in July 1972 and later Nina remarried. She and her husband Bill Gebhart moved to Spirit River and the girls have since attended the Spirit River School.

Willie Nikiforuk married Audrey Day from Gordondale in 1959, and while he had the other quarter, he bought S.E. 15-80-7-W6 and built his home on it. They had a family of three — Theresa, Cindy and Dwayne, who also attended the Blueberry Creek School. The girls took High School in Spirit River, then Theresa went to U. of A. and is in her final year of Education. Cindy took secretarial training at Junior College in Grande Prairie, and is presently employed at Roblyn Travel Agency. Dwayne is still at Blueberry Creek School.

Roger Rymhs and Family

Life for me began in September, 1943, being born on a farmstead approximately 20 kilometres north-east of Rycroft, the youngest child of Mary and Dan Shmyr. My early years were as they were for all rural children — the necessities were there, but luxuries were limited or non-existent.

I attended grade 1-6 at a one room school in Volin. In the mid-50's centralization resulted in many of these schools being shut down. Students from the Volin area were then transported to the Rycroft School. Being moved from a one-room school of 18 students where everyone knew everyone else, to a large multi-room school was a very traumatic experience to all of us. Youngsters adjust quickly, however, and in a matter of a few months new friends were made and life began to seem normal again. I con-



Four Horse Team.

tinued my schooling in Rycroft until graduation in 1961. During the following 4 years, following graduation, I farmed my father's land and worked on various road construction projects in the local area. It was while working on the last project, where I was expected to shovel gravel for 8 hours of night shift, that I decided that there must be more exciting and rewarding things to do. At this point I decided to enroll in the Education Faculty of the University of Alberta.

I attended full-time sessions of the U of A. beginning of Sept. of 1965. I then began my second year in 1966, completing it in mid-April of 1967. Upon my return to the Spirit River area, the Superintendent informed me that I would be interning at a place called Blueberry Creek, beginning the first school day in May.

Although I had visited my sister residing in the same general area I had paid little attention to anything other than the roadway to her home. The day before I was scheduled to start, I ventured into this land known to me as "Across the Creeks" arriving on the school grounds at approximately mid-afternoon. The principal showed me to the teacherage I would be living in, and I began to move in.

The teacherage was a two-room dwelling furnished with a table and chair, single bed, propane stove, and few other luxuries. It had a cistern water system, the lights worked, but as I was to discover later on, the stove did not work because the propane bottle was empty. That evening I enjoyed a delicious cold meal. The following morning I realized I needed to shave, but had no electric shaver nor any hot water. As is often said, If there's a will there's a way. To solve the problem of there being no hot water I inverted an electric iron I had for pressing clothes and placed a pan of water on it. In a few minutes the water was hot and my problem was solved. The brightest feature of my new home was the rental — \$20.00 per month.

In May of 1967, my teaching career began. At this time there were 6 teachers and approximately 130 students in grade 1-9. I spent a considerable portion of May and June preparing the grounds for a Divisional track meet which Blueberry Creek would be hosting. In mid-June approximately 500 athletes from all the schools in the Division converged upon the school to demonstrate their athletic abilities. It was an exhausting day for all the organizers. By the end of June I had familiarized myself with the operations of the school and had learned a considerable amount about teaching.

On July 7 I married Betty (nee Haley). Now, at least I had help to move into our new home, a School Division trailer. The following two years were hec-

tic, as they always are for a beginning teacher. Following my first complete year of teaching I assumed the principalship of the school. This, of course, meant additional assignment of tasks. During these two years my wife, Betty, worked as a nurse in the Central Peace Hospital.

In the summer of 1969 I decided to return to the University of Alberta to complete my Bachelor of Education program. With the patience and support (moral and financial) of my wife I received my Degree in the spring of 1971.

I resumed my former position at Blueberry Creek School on Sept. 1, 1971 and have remained here since.

In February of 1973, our first child was born. Trisha is presently enrolled in grade 3. A couple of years later, in May of 1975 our second daughter, Deena, arrived. She is presently a member of the Blueberry Creek kindergarten class. Both daughters, during their younger years in particular, have assisted me considerably with "marking" student exercises and tests. Many of my former students will certainly remember "strange" markings appearing over the sheets they had handed in to me for correction.

During the years the rural population has been constantly declining as family after family move away, and as families have fewer children. Today's enrolment in grades 1-8 is a total of 76 students, approximately 60% of what it was in 1967. As the population of a community diminishes so does the feeling of community. Although this trend is not unique to this community, I believe it is unfortunate that it is so.

It has been my decision to remain in the teaching profession because I believe few jobs are as rewarding as teaching is. A teacher watches the innocent, smiling, eager youngster entering the school for his first day of school, then 12 years later sees this same person as a young lady or man. Somehow a teacher feels partly responsible for a portion of what this young adult now is, and this is satisfying.

Since I began teaching in this area about 150 students have now completed their schooling. An unusually large portion of these have done extremely well academically, entering various professions. Those not entering the professions have done equally well, in that all have become responsible citizens of this nation — the ultimate goal of any educational program. What could be more rewarding than knowing that somehow I contributed to these students achieving this ultimate goal.

The Bill Skoworodkos

Afanasiy (Tom) Skoworodko was born in White Russia, in the Brest region. He married Ahafia

Stelmaschuk of the same region, when over the next several years their children were born — Anastasia in 1907, Martha (Matruna) in 1909, Trafim in 1911, and William (Bill) in 1919.

In 1914, during World War I the family was evacuated to Central Russia, the Kurst region, where Tom saw war service in some capacity. In 1920 they returned to Brest.



Tom and Ahafia Skoworodko.



Kutrowski Seniors, 1928.

In 1929 Tom decided that his family should immigrate to Canada so that his sons could live in a land where they would have a greater opportunity to own more land. By this time Anastasia and Martha were already married and their families stayed in what by then was called Poland. After three weeks of travel they arrived by boat at Halifax, N.S., then they travelled by train to Winnipeg. When tickets were purchased to Canada there was a specific destination; the Skoworodkos had bought tickets to Winnipeg. After a stay of two days in Winnipeg they decided to go on to Rycroft, Alberta by train, arriving in July. They stayed with friends in Rycroft until they found a small house.

In January 1930, Tom moved his family to their homestead, one mile north of the present Blueberry Creek School. They lived the rest of the winter with Fred Skoworodko and his family in their eleven by fourteen foot, one-room house. There were eleven people in those close quarters. Needless to say, in the spring their own house went up as quickly as they could manage!

The first winter on the homestead was very hard — they lived on rolled oats and pork meat. Sugar was a treat rarely if ever seen.

In the first three years Tom and his sons worked their way from manpower through one horsepower to four horsepower. To them it was a great improvement, although Tom was one of the first in the area to buy a tractor.

During this time, their daughter Martha and her husband Fred Melnychuk emigrated to Canada, living with the family before moving to their own homestead.

In 1940 Trafim married Mary Wawreniuk and moved to their present farm site. In 1947 Tom and Ahafia moved into Spirit River, and Bill took over the family farm, working in co-operation with Trafim.

In 1950 Bill married Mary Kutrowski. Over the next few years their children were born — Alex in 1950, Gordon in 1951, and Phyllis in 1955. In 1957 Bill, Mary, and family moved one mile west and one-half mile south of the school, where Shirley was born in 1965.

Tom Skoworodko passed away on December 22, 1959, and Ahafia on January 15, 1974.

Bill and Mary moved to Grande Prairie in 1970, and their sons Alex and Gordon took over the farming.

In 1972 Gordon married Donna Hudson, and they moved back to Blueberry in 1975, moving onto the Bill Graham farm. They have three daughters, Kimberly born in 1975, Shelley in 1977, and Lori in 1979.

Alex married Jean Forgie in 1975 and their daughter Adrienne was born in 1980.



Bill Skoworodko Family.

Phyllis married Glenn Chester in 1975 and they live in Grande Prairie with their two sons; Benjamin born in 1977, and Evan born in 1981.

Shirley is a high school student living at home in Grande Prairie.

The Fred Skoworodko Family

Fred Skoworodko was born in Zabolotzie, Russia, in 1893. Vera Smal was also born in Zabolotzie, Russia in 1900. They were married in 1920 and farmed with Fred's parents, and also lived with them for nine years. They then heard of "the land of milk and honey", and came to seek their fortune in Canada in July 1929. They had three children who came with them; Anita born in 1921, John born in 1925, and Mike born in 1927.

At that time many people filed on homesteads, sight unseen, and Fred filed on NE 16-80-7-W6. In September of 1929 Steve was born, followed by Olga in 1932, and Katie in 1939, bringing their family to six. All six children attended the Blueberry Creek School, and the family helped with the farm work.

In 1947 Fred purchased a country store from Bill Matiasow at Devale. That fall the store was moved to NE 10-80-7-W6, in the Ksituan district. The family was kept very busy with farm chores and helping operate the store. In the fall of 1953 the senior Skoworodkos sold the store and bought a revenue home in Edmonton. They lived in Edmonton until 1971 then moved to Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River for their retirement. Their health was slowly failing, and in 1975 they were moved to Swan Haven

Nursing Home in Grande Prairie. Fred passed away in Grande Prairie in 1977, and his wife Vera was moved to the Alberta Hospital in Edmonton in July 1979, and she is still there.

Anita Skoworodko married Charlie Dolhan in 1938. they farmed in the Yellow Creek district on NE 19-80-6-W6 until 1956, then bought N½ 27-78-7-W6 north of Spirit River and sold their land at Yellow Creek. Later they sold the farms and bought a home in Spirit River where they now live and enjoy their semi-retirement. They had one son who died at birth in 1942.

John Skoworodko married Marion Nikiforuk in 1948 and they lived on the farm at Rycroft for seven years. They moved to Spirit River in 1955 but retained the farm at Rycroft. John always did trucking and continued in that as well as looking after the farm. They had two children, Kenneth and Lorraine, who attended the Spirit River School.

Mike Skoworodko married Anita Didyk in 1950, and they lived in Spirit River until 1957. He did trucking, and owned the Cockshutt dealership in Spirit River. This was later sold to Caryk Brothers, and the Mike Skoworodkos moved to Vanderhoof, B.C., where they continued in the trucking business. In 1969 they moved to Abbotsford, B.C., and are presently living there, where Mike owns his own trucking business. They had three daughters, Judy, Betty, and Darlene.

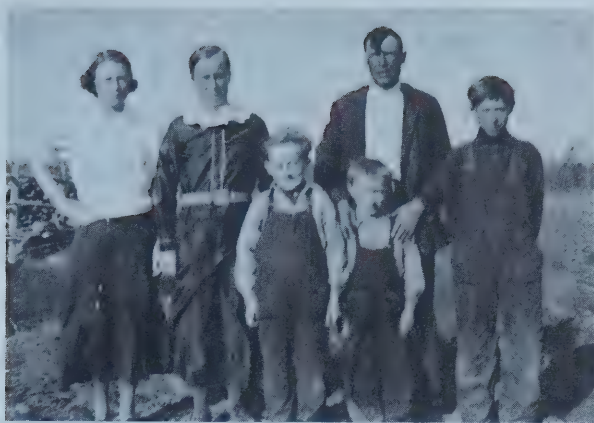
Olga Skoworodko married Ted Vansil in 1951. Olga owns and operates the Charm Beauty Salon in Spirit River. Ted was the town foreman for the town of the Spirit River for many years, and passed away suddenly in 1975. They had one daughter Phyllis who took her schooling in Spirit River.

Steve Skoworodko is an ordained Baptist Minister and is serving a Ukrainian Baptist Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He married in Saskatchewan in 1954, and he and his wife Martha have two sons, Lawrence and Dennis.

Kay Skoworodko married Sam Bilozier in 1969. Kay, a hairdresser, is employed by the Marvel Beauty Schools of Edmonton, and they live in Edmonton.

Symchuk Family by granddaughter Judy Machtans

In 1930, the Kalistrat Symchuk family, (wife Katherine, eldest daughter, Kate 6 years old, two sons, Karp 4 and Peter 6 months) left for Canada with all their belongings from the village of Sekoon, in the district of Kowel, Ukraine. They travelled from Gedansk, Poland, by ship, the Oscar II liner, to Halifax. Mother and daughter were very sea-sick, Mother was unable to care for the infant Peter, so a nurse helped, all the while Mrs. Symchuk was afraid



Symchuk Family — late '30's.

the nurse would steal her son. The language barrier was a very great hardship on the trip.

The Symchuks left the Ukraine in order that the children could have a better life and more freedom. Arriving in Halifax, after clearing customs, they boarded a train to Edmonton, Alta., then later travelled to Smokey Lake, the entire trip took about 6 weeks. Later that year, during the summer they moved to Spirit River. They stayed with Panas (Thomas) Skowordko family until they could build a small log house on their homestead, NW 1-T.80--R.7-W.6.

They brought with them to the new land the essential items, such as an axe, sickle, lantern, scythe, clothing and household utensils and dried fruit. Their homestead had small meadows (clearings) on the knolls and the rest of the land was covered with large willows and poplars. Their diet consisted of mostly moose meat, vegetables (donated by the neighbors the first year) and pork.

Kalistrat Symchuk helped the farmers clear their land in the area, to earn money, this was done by axe and man alone. He rode the freight trains to Sask. to work for farmers. He was gone very long periods of time with no communication with his family. Kalistrat purchased his first team of horses from Vic Mitchell at Blueberry Mtn. Two more sons were born, John and Steve. The children attended school at Blueberry Creek, they had to walk and in the spring the water would be flowing, so they would arrive at school soaking wet.

In 1943, Kate married Steve Kucharuk, moved to his homestead in the Yellow Creek district. They had one daughter, Judy (Machtans). The same year, the first log house burned and they rebuilt a larger home, which still stands on the homestead.

In 1954, Peter married Rose Krysta and now reside in Jarvie, Alta. (Rose's home town). They have two children, Carol Ann married and living in Ed-

monton, their son Michael at home. Carol has a daughter, named Katherine.

In 1958, John married Betty Kozenko and had a family of four, Lorene, (Mrs. Dan Sopko and has a daughter Carla) Laura, Leonard, Lois. John passed away in 1965. Karp married a girl in Manitoba and had three children, Judy, John and Peter. Karp passed away in 1978. Steve is married and lives in Winnipeg, they have no family. Grandmother Symchuk (Katherine) died in 1962, Grandfather (Kalistrat) passed away in 1969.

John Zuk

John Zuk was born in the Ukraine on October 9th, 1897. He was a young boy of fifteen when captured by the Austrian Army, and became a high ranking soldier. He later came home after serving his time, and was then captured by the Polish Army. In this Army he served beside his brother Nick, and saw Nick shot off his horse but couldn't help because of heavy fighting.

Later he got married, and in 1927 with the help of relatives from Lamont area, he and his wife and daughter Barbara departed for Canada. He worked for farmers in that area and around Warspite and Athabasca. At that time another daughter Mary was born. He filed for a homestead in the Meanook area,



Mr. and Mrs. John Zuk, Barbara and Mary — approx. 1932.

but while building a shack he realized how many rocks there were, so leaving the family behind in the winter of 1929 he headed for good farming land he had heard of in the Peace River area.

How he happened to land in the Spirit River area is unknown, but he filed and received his homestead in the Yellow Creek area NE 4-80-6-W.6 He then went back for his family and worked that winter till February. By that time he had enough money to bring his family to Spirit River by train from Athabasca. They got a ride by wagon to their homestead.

When they arrived, they had nothing but a few clothes, an axe and a saw, plus two little girls, so a shack was built in a hurry. From that day on it was a struggle for survival, by clearing land for himself and at the same time working for other established farmers in the Blueberry Mtn. area. He worked for Mr. Houston and a few others in Blueberry Mtn., and for Mr. Bilawchuk and Mr. Krishka in what is now called Deep Valley Area, and also for the Kaplans of Spirit River.

At that time a day's work was worth fifty cents, or a bushel of grain, the use of a horse or plow, or maybe some meat, whatever you needed or whatever you managed to get from your employer. This meant hard labour, like brushing with an axe or stooking long hours: it was no eight hour day or five day week.

Shortly after they were settled, they were lucky enough to have a nice neighbor move onto the next quarter to them. This was Mr. Steve Baduik and family, and that was a Godsend for the Zuks. The Baduiks moved here from Whitburn and they were more established, so when Zuks needed a horse or plow or whatever, they always had help from the Baduiks. That made their life a little happier, safer, and most encouraging.

The Kapral family were neighbors as well and also very kind people. Mr. Kapral and Mr. Zuk got together every fall and winter, and used to beat the freight back to Lamont and St. Michael to work for the rich farmers. To explain the phrase "beat the freight" is when you sneak in the box car, flat deck, cattle car, or even between the cars, cold as ever. You made sure the engineer didn't see you or he would throw you off. Many people froze to death by beating the freight, and some were even killed by falling off.

During this time John Zuk's wife died giving birth to another daughter, and the infant died shortly after. At that time there was no doctor or nurse, only the much appreciated help of the neighboring women, especially the Kaprals and Baduiks. It wasn't long before John remarried, looking for survival as well as raising his two young daughters the best way he knew how.

In the spring of 1938 a son Harry was born. That



Mr. and Mrs. J. Zuk and Harry 1944.

was a happy occasion, as finally he had his boy. However, shortly afterwards the baby was quite sick for a while. One particular time they thought the baby was dying, so the oldest girl Barbara ran all the way to the Blueberry Mountain store for the nurse. When the nurse saw the baby she asked for a tub of snow, into which she put the baby, and a few seconds later he was crying. The nurse said a few minutes longer and he would have died. The nurse's name is unknown, but I believe this was in the fall of 1938. If this lady reads this book "Thank You" from that boy.

The Yellow Creek school was built in 1937, and was a community project. The first teacher was Mr. Rockarts. Later years it was very hard to get teachers, so they had to settle for correspondence supervisors. There was no house for the teacher to live in, so she had to get board and room at some farmer's place and walk to school. Later on teacherages were built, and this made things easier for teachers.

When going to town most of the farmers had to walk cross-country, which was about nine miles, plus about five creeks to cross. Coming back was even harder, because there were groceries to pack, and there was not even a road, just a small trail. One night John Zuk was coming home, and on the bottom of this one creek he heard a moaning. He had a rest, and as he lit a cigarette he heard another moan. At first he thought it was some animal, but the second time he

knew that it wasn't. Trying not to lose the trail, as it was pitch dark, he started to holler and used his pulley lighter. About ten feet off the trail he saw a body curled up in the snow. He dropped his groceries, picked up the person, and it happened to be Mrs. Hrisook. She was still alive, but that was about all, so he started rubbing her hands and face, and he got two words out of her "Help Me". Not wasting any time he picked her up on his back and packed her up the hill to Krishka's place, which was almost a mile away. It was almost 10 o'clock, but the Krishka's light was a good guide, and John kept hoping they'd stay up long enough for him to get there, fearing he'd get lost in the dark if their light was turned off. Finally when he got there Mr. and Mrs. Krishka and John all tried to get Mrs. Hrisook back to life by rubbing her hands and feet in snow. She finally came around, and I believe they gave her a shot of whiskey (good old moonshine). By about 4 o'clock that morning she was talking and the danger was over. She told them she was coming home from town with groceries, and being dark she got off the trail. She was very tired and cold so she thought she'd have a little rest, and that was all she remembered. They stayed at Krishka's all night, and at daylight John Zuk went down the creek, got the groceries he had left there the night before, and found Mrs. Hrisook's groceries. They both went home the next day, but John figured if he had been about an hour later she would have frozen to death.

The only road for hauling grain and livestock to town was just a trail fit for a wagon. It went by Ksituan School then across to Hawrylenko's place where they'd spend the night and feed the horses. Hawrylenkos were a large family but they always had room for anyone who came by. Another creek was crossed, southeast towards town, somewhere next to where Highway 49 now is. There was another better road via Cache One, but it was much further. From Ksituan it went West and South to the Cache One barn, and it must have been somewhere just east of the Ksituan Creek on Highway 49 now. The Cache One barn was run by an Indian named Testawich, then there was another barn closer to Spirit on the same road called Rankin's. That was a four-day trip whereas by Hawrylenko's it was only a two-day journey.

Those creeks were very steep, and heavy going. Chains were attached to the back wheels or the back sleigh, otherwise the horses would never hold the load back when going downhill. When going up, one team was unhooked and doubled up with the other, as it took two teams to pull a load up. This was why John Zuk and Steve Baduik always freighted together, to help one another in case of trouble, and they shared

their ideas. As a result of this, people said "Wherever you saw Baduik, you saw Zuk or vice versa". Even after the new Devale road was built, it was a tough road to travel, though a big improvement over the old one.

Another problem in the area in the early '30's, was the water supply, as the winters had very little snow and summers were dry. As luck would have it, there was a big slide which blocked a large amount of water on the creek running east to Jack Sadownik's farm. The farmers built a road from both sides and everyone for miles around hauled water from that dammed up creek; some people hauled every day. They couldn't haul very much at one time, as the creek was very steep. You were lucky if you had 45 gallons left by the time you reached the top. The people who lived close by would chase their livestock to the waterhole, rather than haul that much water.

Mr. Jack Sadownik also came to this area in the early '30's from Southern Alberta, and stayed at John Zuk's until he built his shack or house (also with the help of Baduiks, Kaprals, and other neighbours). People at that time were poor, but rich in one respect, as they helped one another. There was none of this "I'll help you one day and you help me two days".

Things got a little easier as time went on, or should I say that the men didn't beat the freights anymore. There was work around home, either that or you provided for yourself — like getting lumber sawed for yourself at the local sawmill. Most people worked for wages at a big sawmill located where the



Three generations: John, son Harry and wife Gloria, and boys Wayne and Larry.

baseball park now is in Moonshine Lake. The mill there was called Spinny's Sawmill.

We also had a local blacksmith in the Yellow Creek district which was a big help. Mr. Boyko had his own forge and blower and was a very good blacksmith. John Zuk had a government Red Angus bull, for the use of farmers around, and the fee for the use of the bull was fifty cents. In later years there were local threshing outfits, and local sawmills where winter employment was available, or farmers were busy improving the homestead by getting lumber sawed, instead of working for it.

Yellow Creek School was built as a community project in 1937, and later community projects were Ksituan Church and hall. I know people had more fun and respect than they have nowadays. People worked very hard and had little or no money to show for it. However, the people knew how to survive and have fun: like two-week holidays, parties at Christmas, and three-day weddings.

John Zuk retired from farming in 1967 and bought a house in Spirit River. He passed away February 1974 at age 75 due to cancer of the lungs. His last few months were spent at Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River. He left behind two daughters, Barbara and Mary, and a son Harry, one brother Peter in Winnipeg, and one sister in the Ukraine. His daughter Barbara Fenton passed away in Calgary one year later of a heart attack. She managed dining lounges, like the Wales and Stampede Hotels, and later worked for Macdonalds Consolidated as a shipping clerk. She left behind three sons, Larry Glowasky from Victoria, who now operates two Service Stations in the Carribean. Larry and his wife Sharon have one son Paul. Ken Glowasky is a trucker in Winnipeg and he and his wife Betty have a son Michael. Bill Fenton is single and is a photographer in Calgary. Barbara's first husband was Jim Glowasky, father of Larry and Ken.

The second daughter, Mary Smith is in Victoria, B.C., and has two sons: Bill is a Highways engineer in Cranbrook, B.C., and Wayne is with Safeway Stores in Victoria.

Son Harry is farming at Spirit River, after quitting school at age 15, because there was no money for school. Harry managed to get a job with the Dept. of Highways where he spent 15 years operating heavy equipment and also doing shop work in Edmonton and Calgary. He worked on the Calgary, Edmonton Highway, the Carvel Corner (Junction 16 and 43), and later retired to building local roads. He is now farming and still operating equipment. Harry married Gloria Robbins from Sangudo in 1960, and they have three children, Wayne 17, Larry 13, and Tracy 6, all attending school.

I often wonder how, after all the bitterness and hardship, the remaining old timers still say "THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS".

The Zyllas — 50 years in Alberta by Enna

Theodore (Fred) and Martha Zylla decided to leave Poland and make a new start in Canada. At this time there were four children; Mike — 4 years old, Bill — 2½, John — 1, and Enna — 1 month old. They arrived in Halifax in May 1929.

Fred heard the land in Alberta was good, covered with a lot of trees. Since there was a severe shortage of wood in Europe, he chose a heavily wooded quarter section at Mountain Trail, Alberta, later moving to Mountain Side, Alberta, where they lived for thirteen years. During their years in this part of Alberta, they added to their family — Mary, Vera, Nick, Alex, Kay, Danny, and David.

Although Fred and Martha were blessed with many children, the farming was poor, as the brush was too dense to clear, and the depression was making it impossible to find work away from the farm. At this time Fred heard of good land in the Blueberry Creek area and went to investigate this possibility. The Federal Government came to the rescue by advising Fred they were willing to trade his quarter at Mountain Trail for one at Blueberry Creek. In 1942, Fred made his trade, moved to the area and started homesteading an additional two quarters. Three of his sons — Mike, Bill and John had finished school by this time and helped clear and farm the land. The rest of the children attended Blueberry Creek School, and a church was built with Fred as pastor.

Just as the future started looking brighter for the Zylla's, World War II broke out and Mike, the eldest,



Zylla Family Picture.



Farm at Blueberry Creek.

was drafted. There was much worrying during the war years, but he made it home safe and sound when the war ended.

Finances picked up during this time, as Fred and his son Bill were able to work on the Alaska Highway, built during the war years, while Martha and the younger children kept the farm operating.

In September 1947, a Calgarian named William Gordon Marles, came to teach grades one to three at Blueberry Creek. One of the first people he met was Enna Zylla, and they were married in November 1947. In April 1948 they moved to Edmonton where Gordon tried selling shoes for the Bay, and later worked for North West Industries. They were blessed with three daughters and during their time in Edmonton — Linda born in 1948, Patricia in 1950, and Carol in 1951.

In 1951, Enna and Gordon got a homestead in Snowdrift, Alberta, nine miles from Blueberry Creek, and decided to farm in the area so Gordon could resume teaching. From 1952 on, they lived in teacherages as Gordon taught at Blueberry Mountain, Yellow Creek, and Blueberry Creek. During this time, Enna operated the general store and post office at Poplar Ridge, located on a corner of Fred Zylla's farm at Blueberry Creek. They also spent the required time on the homestead, finally earning the title. Also at this time in their lives Kenneth was born in 1955, James Gary in 1957, and Robert Donald in 1959.

Realizing that education for a family of this size was very important, Enna and Gordon moved back to Edmonton where Gordon continued his university education and Enna completed her high school education. Gordon taught at North Edmonton and Balwin schools, and graduated with his Bachelor of Education degree in 1965. He continued teaching at Balwin Jr. High until his death in August 1968.

From 1968 until 1976 Enna worked as a secretary, supporting the family and looking after her home. In 1976 she met an oil man, James Robert Rodgers and they were married in December 1976 and settled at Drayton Valley. Later they moved to Edmonton.

The Marles children are all grown up, married, and have families of their own.

Although Enna was the first of the Zylla children to marry, the others have all followed suit. Mike, while at Yellow Creek, married Marie Litwin from High Prairie, and they are currently with their family in Vancouver. Bill married Helen Scrypyk from Nampa, and they now farm in the Debolt area. John married Anne Sushynski from Spirit River and they are farming in the Grande Prairie area, with Anne working as a nursing aide in Grande Prairie. Nick married Ruth and they live in Penticton, B.C. Mary married Alex Piatocha, a Baptist minister in Edmonton. Alex married Sonya from Manitoba, and they live in Edmonton. Kay married Ken Lovell, and they live in Calgary, Alberta. Danny married Irene and they operate a motel in Florida. Dave married Ruby Gawryluk and they live in Edmonton. Vera married Ed Klettke and they live in Grande Prairie.

As the children left home, Fred and Martha decided to sell their farms and move. First they moved to Grande Prairie and bought a house, but Fred felt he didn't have enough to do, so they sold the house and bought an apartment in Edmonton. They looked after the block themselves until 1966 when it became apparent there was too much work for them. They sold the apartment and bought a house in Londonderry, Edmonton, where they still reside.

In 1972, Fred and Martha celebrated their Golden Anniversary with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and friends. They are still very active in the Church, and hope to continue on in Alberta for years to come.

Blueberry Mountain

The following is from a newspaper clipping of Blueberry Mountain news dated August 24, 1942:

“For the benefit of about thirty local residents who are either overseas or serving in the armed forces of Canada, the old correspondent will, for a short time, resume broadcasting the news.

A memorial service was held in Blueberry Hall in memory of the late Mrs. Corbett and conducted by Rev. Mr. Hancock of Wanham. A large congregation was in attendance.

Jim Penny returned from a pleasant trip to Fort St. John, where he was visiting his daughter, Mrs. Al. Galbraith.

Nick Badiuk and family were Sunday visitors on August 23.

Mrs. W. J. McCormick also entertained Mr. and Mrs. Stairs of Fairview.

It is rumored that the short road to Spirit River via Ksituan will soon be open for traffic.

Mr. Clowes of Calgary has been visiting his daughter Mrs. W. Collins, and is taking Elsie Collins home with him so that she may be able to attend the high school in that city.

Marjorie Mitchell, who is a nurse in training at Lethbridge Hospital, has been spending her vacation with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Mitchell.

Mrs. W. J. McCormick had a thrill in listening to her oldest son speaking over the radio from London, England. From other sources we hear that Eddie spent a seven-day leave with the parents of our neighbor, Jack Richards. It is sure pleasant to have our boys entertained in British homes, and I am convinced that Eddie will never forget Bedwas, Wales.

Bobby and Joan Cook of Wembley were visiting their cousins at Andy Ellison's last week. Just to refresh the minds of the boys overseas, these children belong to Sgt. Cook of the Provost Service at the Grande Prairie Training Centre.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Chahley of Yellow Creek, August 17, a baby girl.

Mose Laverne is still on the sick list.

For the past two years Miss Walwork has been

our efficient Provincial Service Nurse. She is now leaving for a short vacation with her parents at Lethbridge and is going to continue her studies at McGill University. We wish her bon voyage and the best of luck.

For the past six weeks Mrs. A. J. Grenache has been visiting in the central part of the province. After taking in the Calgary Stampede she spent a month at the Diamond Cross dude ranch near Seebe, which is close to the Company of the Veterans Guard, in which her husband, A. J., is serving. A. J. is expected home on leave in the near future.”

Anne (Badiuk) Mieske

I was born in Emerson, Manitoba in 1925 and was nine months old when Mom and Dad (Nick and Sophie Badiuk) moved from Emerson, Manitoba to Rycroft in 1926 where dad worked for Fred Sandul in Rycroft and Fairview.

Later we moved to Ksituan, a few miles from Sopkows, where we had a general store which burned down in 1932. Ksituan was where I started school, and after we moved to Blueberry Mountain I attended school there, then finished High School in Spirit River. Dad had a store at Blueberry Mountain, located where Bird's store was till 1979, and he was also the blacksmith.

My brother Jack (proper name John) was born in Rycroft in 1929 and started his school at Blueberry in 1936. He now resides in Orizaba, Vera Cruz, Mexico, and works as an engineer for Kimberly Clark Ltd., (who make the Kleenex products). He is married and has three girls and one boy.

Our neighbors in Blueberry, Dan and Maggie Galbraith, were like parents to Jack and I, and made the best ice cream!! We in turn had to take the cows to their place from the pasture across the road from the store.

I recall the dances, picnics, etc., at the old Blueberry School and at Whitburn. Lots of great times were had, even in winter travelling by sleighs that were covered over and had a small heater; singing



Old Blueberry Store.

songs and telling stories. The momas and the papas and all the kids would go. No one could play the violin like Tommy Lindsay, and no one could call a square dance like Bill Lindsay.

We moved to Spirit River from Blueberry, and dad had a store where Ternoway's Super A now stands. We left Spirit in 1946 and moved first to Hardisty, then Ponoka, then Lacombe, Bruderheim, then dad had a theatre in Vancouver, and from there we moved to Edmonton.

I married Rupert Mieske in Edmonton, and we had a son and daughter, who are both married now and we have two grandchildren. Rupert died in 1977.

I now have a Flower Shop here in Wetaskiwin. Dad (Nick Badiuk) passed away in 1975, and Mom is at the Good Samaritan Nursing Home in Stony Plain, Alberta.

Some Blueberry Mountain History by Loreen (Penny) Bateman

In March of 1919, A. E. "Dewey" Bateman, along with D. H. "Steve" Keay, Rod McDonald, and Rolly Hoggarth arrived in the Peace River area looking for homesteads. They travelled on foot, except for when they could borrow saddle horses. They looked over lands in the Pouce Coupe, Dawson Creek, Bad Heart, and Spirit River areas, settling in Blueberry Mountain district. They each filed on a half section of land before returning to their homes in Saskatchewan. Dewey's folks lived in Dubuc, Saskatchewan. While there they gathered equipment, stock and machinery for homesteading, then loaded two train box cars and shipped by rail, arriving in Spirit River in June of that year. The railroad from Edmonton north was memorable for its uncertain schedule and speed. The passengers joked about



Caboose on Sleigh.

stepping off to pick wild strawberries and catching the end of the train as it went by later.

Once unloaded in Spirit River they faced the arduous task of transporting their belongings over the rough and muddy fifty-two miles out to Blueberry Mountain. The journey required nine days of hardship on man and beast, as they were plagued by mosquitoes and flies, bumping over stumps, and wading sloughs, then camping out each night. When they reached Blueberry they all camped on McDonald's land. Together they built the first log cabin. In time they each moved to their homesteads. Dewey camped under his wagon until he could cut some logs from his land, and with the help of the others constructed his first cabin complete with sod roof.

During that summer and fall of 1919 he managed to build his cabin, a barn, and break his first thirteen acres of land. By New Years his mother and sister Hilda joined him for an extended visit.

During that same year many soldiers from the first World War settled in Blueberry: Bill McCormick, Heavy Tarr, Andy Ellison, Shorty Collins, Buck Burrows, Jack Campbell, Howard Pegg, Harry Hanrahan, Hiram Walker, Al Grenache, Tom Gillespie (known as the Earl of Blueberry), and others. This was largely a settlement of returned veterans seeking peace and quiet after the years of battle and noise.

Their social life consisted of house parties in their small cabins. They danced to the music on cylinder records played on the old gramophones with large

horns "His Master's Voice". Dewey owned one of them. It is not known what became of it, a rare antique now.

In the summertime picnics were held, with everyone joining in a softball game. As always, the mosquitoes swarmed in hordes. The many sloughs and long grass provided breeding places. Some ladies resorted to lining their hose with newspapers to protect themselves. Pant suits were not the fashion of those days.

In time a road was cut through the green timber to shorten the distance to Spirit River to 35 miles. It made use of an unused railroad grade running west from town, then cut north through the timber. The men turned out to help build the road. Dewey stayed behind to tend the stock, having been severely wounded in the leg during the war. He was forced to make some concessions to his injury for some years.

The settlers worked together to cut logs for a community hall. It was built on a road allowance between the two Howard's farms. Measuring 30'x30' and with a shingled cottage roof, the fir flooring made a good solid dance floor. Here all the social functions were held. A few musical instruments replaced the old gramophones. Later the hall was used for a school during summer months.

Margaret McDonald, (a sister of Rod and Angus) and Steve Keay were married in 1920. Their first child Beth was born in 1921, the first white child born in the district. Steve was a stone mason by trade and not a farmer. They moved to Spirit River a few years later, first managing the immigration hall, and later opening a hardware store. Their family grew to three daughters.

Mrs. Mary MacDermiad, another McDonald sister, and a war widow, also homesteaded in Blueberry. She later married Donald Innes and moved to Sexsmith. Angus McDonald returned to Saskatchewan until the mid 1930's when he began farming out of Spirit River. Rod also left Blueberry for a number of years, but returned with a wife in the thirties. They made an important contribution to the district, helping to establish the Presbyterian Church for one thing.

By the year 1928 Blueberry was a well established community. The George Milldrums had located on the main road in, and kept the Post Office in their home. Some families had come and gone, the Peevers, Lillicos, Scills, Hollman, and others, but new people were moving in who were not returned soldiers.

In April of that year the families of Dan Galbraith and Jim Penny arrived. Dan rented the Keay farm, and for a time they lived together there. Jim filed on the quarter west of Keays. They cut logs in the green

timber, hauled them and peeled them, to construct a house 16'x20'. It had a shingle roof and board floor with a home-made door. All hands turned in to shingle the roof and chink the cracks with moss gathered from the bush nearby. In June, the family moved into the bright new home. It was small for four people, but a kitchen and bedroom were added to it later.

Dan filed on a quarter across the road from Milldrums. Soldiers were allowed half sections, others could have quarters for \$10, and after three years and set improvements could claim them as their own. Galbraiths lived on Keay's farm until their nice big house was built near a draw. Later he learned this could only provide spring run-off water. However, a well dug on the northwest corner provided unlimited water. Tho' somewhat tainted, one became adjusted to it quite readily. A big day arrived when many hands with their teams turned out to move the house to the well area. The partitions were constructed of half inch local lumber. In time as it shrank, many revealing cracks formed. The house still stands tho' vacant now.

There still was no school in 1928. Mrs. Penny applied for correspondence school. Now the little room in the new house, heated with a little iron cooking stove, and with a packing case upended for dish and food cupboard, converted by night to a bedroom by the use of a Winnipeg couch, also became a schoolroom. She conducted classes for her girls Hilda and Loreen, and Gladys Galbraith. Later Myland Mitchell joined them for a few months. In the spring of 1929 a few people gathered at Jack and Alice Campbell's to discuss the opening of a school. Four children — two Mitchells and two Pennys, provided the needed requirement for the government to act. That year Jean Walker was brought in to open the first school. Two blackboards were tacked on the log walls of the hall. A few desks were bought and precious little else. Jim Stone was hired to build two outside toilets and a book cupboard; not being a carpenter, the work was a little rough.

School was held from April to the end of October. Jean was attending University so a second young woman was brought in for the fall months. Jean came back a second year and then married Vic Mitchell.

Mrs. Penny also served as a practical nurse for some years until a district nurse was supplied by the government. Many a baby's painful swollen gums during teething were relieved by the use of Mrs. Penny's sterilized silver thimble. The sufferings of others with pneumonia or bronchitis, etc. found relief when her famous mustard plasters were applied. Made with no water, just white of an egg and sweet oil to moisten them, they were left on overnight to do their good work without fear of burning skin.

She delivered babies often without Dr. Reavely, who, even when called, was sometimes unable to make the long trip on horseback. Her talents were sometimes called upon to help livestock. I recall one lame horse that had the offending leg tied up in a hefty poutice of her bread dough. It did the trick, and he returned to the work force soon after. Less successful was the tragic drowning of two little boys. It may have been different if the time lapse, between the accident, and when she arrived on the scene hadn't been so great. There were no phones or motor cars in those days. Also to her credit goes a part in forming the Goodwill Club in Blueberry.

All during the summer of 1928 people called at the Penny home asking directions to find John Fix. For that summer Dewey had rented his farm to John while he vacationed in Saskatchewan. John had homesteaded further east, and he patiently guided these people who spoke so little English to the available land. In a few months three townships had been filled with Europeans. In a short period of time they had homes built and land broken and seeded, a road cut through to Spirit River via the "old pack trail", across Rat Creek. This trail had been made during the gold rush days when men trekked through to the north from Edmonton on horseback or on foot.

There were two or three schools built, the closest named Blueberry Creek, where Charlie Knight became the first teacher. These people got their start during the hard years of the depression by accepting relief. Later they were able to work off the debt incurred by doing road work for the government. For a time Jim Penny was the road foreman on this work.

About 1929 Tom Meester came to settle, and later his bride by proxy came from Holland. The Meesters in time had a little girl, then twin girls born at home with Mrs. Penny attending. Unfortunately one was born a spastic and lived the life of an invalid.

Frank Tyler and family arrived, also Jim Stone a man of interest and some talent. He used to sing on occasion, later made a name of prominence for himself during the Second World War in Italy. The Meesters also sang with beautiful harmony at many dances.

That year of 1929 saw Whitburn settled, but the land did not produce and many soon left. Some years later Jack Taylor discovered that sweet clover was effective in bringing back fertility to the burned land. The Lindsay brothers and wives were among these settlers. Tom with his fiddle and Bill as caller and master of ceremonies brought new life and fun to the dances. A hall was built in Whitburn and weekly dances alternated between the districts. Other folks from Baytree even attended: a long haul by team. The men dug deep to pay 25 cents each, to pay \$3.00 to

the musician and buy coffee and sandwich makings. Women brought cakes for their entry fee. Later more musicians from the eastern settlement added to the music forming a little band. The coffee was made in a wash boiler filled with water and heated all evening on the wood burning stove (an oil barrel laid on its side with a door cut in one end and a smoke stack in the other). Sandwiches were made by a volunteer committee, either at home or even while the dance was going on.

In the mid 30's a group calling themselves the Doo Dads was formed. We took turns in the homes to make a meal and an evening of cards or dancing about once a month. Some names of those involved are Jesse and Margaret Caterer, Jack Richards, Campbell Reynolds, Jack Burrows, Marianne Cramer, George Esselink, Helen Boadway and Charlie Knight, school teachers, Marie Swan district nurse, Al. Galbraith, Dewey Bateman, and Hilda and Loreen Penny. There may have been others but just four or five homes were suitable — Very Happy Memories!

Helen Boadway laid the cornerstone for the new Blueberry Mtn. school in 1936, built on the SE corner of Herb Keebler's farm.

Logs were cut and sawn at Cramers mill during the winter of 1936 and 37 for the new hall. It was constructed after the writer had left the area, I believe near the school, but later moved to the corner near the store.

Saddle horse tracks across the creeks to the Peace River were another diversion of the young people. On one such trip Mr. and Mrs. Mason Woods went along. Another trip saw Vic and Jean Mitchell, Olive Comer and Dewey ride to the river on horseback. Jim



Dewey, 1935.

Stone led the horses home while the other proceeded down the river on a raft. A friend from Spirit River picked them up by car when they landed at Dunvegan.

By the spring of 1937 the Penny girls were grown up. Hilda married Al Galbraith in March and went to live in Montney, B.C. That same spring Dewey rented his farm to Jim Corbett, sold his stock and effects and moved to the coast. In December he returned to marry Loreen, returning to their new home in Burnaby to live.

The Penny's stayed on in Blueberry Mtn. until they sold out in 1945 and moved to Montney, B.C. In 1947 they moved out to Burnaby.

The Dan Galbraiths eventually built a house in Spirit River where they were living when Dan met an untimely death in the logging world.

Mabel and Louis Bernard

by Mabel Bernard

I was born at Poplar Point, Manitoba in 1897. There were eight in our family; four boys and four girls. We were a very happy family, raised on the prairie. We didn't go out very often, so made our own entertainment. When we did go, we all went (no baby sitters then).

My grandparents came from England. Grandfather Garton was with the Hudson's Bay and worked his way up until he was storekeeper at the town of Hudson Bay. He then homesteaded or received a grant at Poplar Point, Manitoba.

When I was 14 we moved to a small school district called Kelvin, so named by my uncle Adam Thompson. Louis Bernard was born in Winnipeg, and we met when he came to work in Kelvin. He later joined the army in 1914 and was sent overseas 6 weeks later. After the war he took up farming and we were married in 1922.

When our children Agnes and Dick were small, the rust hit our crops three years in a row. We lost everything, as no grain means no feed for stock. We traded horses for a second-hand car. The men had all been sent to Saskatchewan for harvest as there was none in Manitoba. Later they went to Alberta and heard that homesteads were to be opened up there. Louis filed on one in the Shearerdale district in B.C. He later gave it up and filed on one in Blueberry Mountain.

When he returned to Manitoba we took what possessions we could in the car; flour, eggs, potatoes, etc., and our bed rolls made with wool. My brother also went with us and our two children aged four and five. We left on May 4th and visited many relatives on the way north and west. We found tourist cabins

every 100 miles and camped there. Other travellers. had tents etc.

From Edmonton there were many people on their way north. In one place they had wagons, and chickens in coops, and a cook stove; with one person baking bread and one milking a cow etc. They had come from Southern Alberta and were feeding their stock on the lovely green grass. There were also 9 or 10 cars travelling with us. In one place we were second in line coming down a steep hill. The car ahead had just crossed over a pole bridge, when away went the bridge floating down the swift flowing stream. I had to climb the hill and stop the others, as we didn't know whether they had brakes or not. However, they said "Don't worry, we will soon have a better bridge". There were about ten men, and as we were in bush country, they soon had a bridge finished. I was the first to try it, and I walked across.

This was at the time of spring run-off, so water was high. At Smith a log boom had broken loose. Water was three feet above the approach to the ferry and the banks were steep. There were 15 loggers guiding the logs past the ferry. They practically lifted our car off it, so we arrived at Slave Lake. It was raining, and no cabin there. Ours was the only car to get there — the others were all stuck further back. The owner of the pool room told us we could go into the dance hall. We cooked our supper there and went to bed on the floor in our bed rolls, and were soon asleep. In the morning we were very surprised to find our followers all sleeping there as well. We had told the man they were out there, so he sent a caterpillar to bring them in. We hadn't heard a sound.

We left the car at Faust as the roads were flooded, and travelled to Spirit River by train, arriving June 4th 1930. We borrowed a team and wagon and, loaded with flour and groceries for other people, we started for Blueberry Mtn. The horses were gray with mosquitoes as it was hot weather and heavy showers of rain made it humid. We stopped at a bachelor's place (Mr. Lloyd Peacock's) and changed into dry clothes. He was very kind and gave us dinner. On moving on we stopped at Cache One, a stopping place for farmers who hauled their grain in winter. No one was there at that time, and we slept outdoors. The railroad bridge was built then, but we crossed the ravine by the trail along the banks.

Next day we were happily surprised to arrive at Whitburn. There we found the Hamilton family. They were friends of ours who had come from Manitoba two years earlier, and we were all very happy to meet. I stayed there with the children for a few days until Louis had a place ready for us. Mr. Hamilton wanted me to tell him the news from home, but I was so tired, I only wanted to sleep.

At that time there was someone on every quarter of land in Whitburn, and they used to have ball games for summer recreation. Jack Burrows brought some players from Blueberry, some ten miles, and games were played every Sunday.

From Whitburn Mrs. Dan Galbraith took us to her place, and next day they took us to Dewey Bateman's where we took care of his place while he was away breaking land for the settlers. He had chickens and a lovely garden. There were strawberries, raspberries and saskatoons everywhere. We built our own cabin and moved to our homestead in November.

Louis worked for other people to get the use of horses to clear our own land. We had a grant (as he was a veteran), so that helped with the homestead. He cleared 160 acres by hand — the rest by custom work.

I taught my children through correspondence courses for 4 years, as there was no school. When a school was built, Louis was one of the first trustees, also Mr. Frank Tyler and Mr. Tom Nikiforuk.

There was no store in Blueberry Mtn. when we first came, only the Post Office, with Mr. George Milldrum as postmaster. Mr. and Mrs. Milldrum did a great deal to help the settlers and always had the kettle on for tea. We lived three miles east of them, and after a walk of three miles we were glad of that.

Agnes and Dick grew up and left home. Agnes went supervise teaching and Dick worked on the highway. When World War II broke out, Dick joined up and was overseas for two years. Later he was with the oil company in Dawson Creek. He built a house and was married to Lillian Williams. They had 3

children — Sharon who is married to Phil Haight and has two children — twins named Donald and Elaine. They live near Dawson Creek. Donald is in the Navy, and he is married and has two children. Elaine is married to Graydon Sype and also lives in Dawson Creek.

Agnes was married and lived on a farm in Four Mile District. She had a girl Joyce and a boy, Clifford. Joyce lives in Rycroft and has three children — a girl, Bonnie who is 15, a boy, Dennis 10, and a girl Angela 7. Clifford is married and has three children, so there are 10 great grandchildren.

In 1942 Louis went to work on the Alaska Highway. I received a letter saying he got work and wanted me to send his warm clothing. At that time we had such a lot of snow, which was followed by a chinook. As a result the horses had gone through the snow leaving knee deep holes in the road. I had walked to the Post Office and was near home when I fell in a hole and put my knee out of joint. I had a cow to feed and milk, as I as alone. When I got the clothing ready I went to bed, but no sleep, as my knee as so painful. Next day I had to go to the Post Office. I didn't get very far when I fell into another hole, falling in the other direction. My knee snapped back, and after a few minutes it as O.K., so I went to Blueberry. It was just a miracle as there was no chance of anyone going to the store that day.

One night on the homestead, we were awakened by a weasel in the house. I got the broom and tried to scare him out. He got on the broom and I went slowly toward the door, but before he went out he scented the house, just like a skunk. It was so strong we had to go out for the rest of the night, but luckily it was summer. Any food in the house that was not in tins had to be thrown out.

We had many bush fires, as everyone was clearing land. Some fires got away and we all had to help put them out. The smoke was very bad at times.

Later on we had grain to sell, and a trucker, Mike Kinisky, came to haul a load for us. Betty Bordts was attending school in town and wanted a ride. We left home at 7 a.m., and when we reached the highway a big fire was burning for miles along the road. We waited, hoping the wind would go down, as we couldn't see for smoke, how near the blaze was, tho' it seemed to be coming from the Happy Valley direction. It was the first time I had ever left home without lunch, and we were all very hungry. Finally we decided to go through, and in places the flames were coming across the road. At times we couldn't see the road, but at last we got through. In front of us was Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Collins on a tractor. It was a miracle for all of us. We arrived in town at 3:30 p.m., very thankful to be alive.



Mr. and Mrs. Bernard.

In later years we had a good set of buildings, all painted, then we decided to sell the farm. We retired in 1968, and bought a lot with a trailer on it in Spirit River, where we are still living in 1980. In the meantime, we went to Osoyoos, B.C. every winter for 12 years. The climate was mild and dry, but it was damp and windy the last two years, so we didn't go any more. At first we went each winter in our truck, but the last two years we went by bus. We stayed in the Boundary Motel and enjoyed meeting old friends from the prairie each year.



Four Generations.

Birds

Everything But The Wings

by Wilma Bird

Jack Bird was involved with tragedy when I first met him; his first wife was dying of cancer, after a long struggle of three years and many searches for cures in Canada and the States. She had had several remissions, and even when I met her in 1952 it seemed possible that she could recover, but it was not to be. She died, leaving a daughter Bonnie, who was seven months younger than my own daughter Valerie. (My husband had been an air force pilot officer who had not returned from W.W. II).

It seemed like a fairly logical union when we joined forces and provided a home for the two girls in 1953. As Jack used to say later, it was a case of "my kid and your kid being able to fight with our kids". Except that there really wasn't much fighting. The girls were built-in baby sitters for Murray who was born in 1954, Erin in 1955, and Vance in 1956. Colleen was added much later in 1965, but by that time it was Erin who did the baby-sitting.



Old Store.

Jack had already had a fire which destroyed the store he bought in 1947, and had rebuilt a much larger one. His partner, Walter Dorig, rather largely ran the store and post office, while Jack kept a variety of other projects going. Walter married Jean Smyth and they moved to a farm in Wonderland in 1955, leaving me to succeed to the post office, partially to the store, and totally to the task of raising the children — a programme which left me stretched rather thin, most of the time. It was a desperate scramble, but there was never a dull moment.

Jack always had at least one major project on the go, beside our bread and butter ones. The very first one I recall was introducing electricity to the district, which actually was quite a struggle. It is hard to believe now, but there was a lot of opposition. Another one was grain dryers, and he spent several years on that one. It is rather ironical that he was not really successful in retailing what is now recognized as a necessity.

He was always very interested in promoting the homesteading "across the creeks", and many a new prospective homesteader talked to Jack on his way "in", since the road then led right past the store. The homesteaders, with few exceptions, had a hard struggle with their gamble with the government, which also involved us because they needed credit, so we found ourselves juggling our currency just as precariously, and in exact ratio to theirs! The homesteaders' needs were Jack's interests too, so he was always involved with road programs, school interests, variables in agriculture, etc.

We had, beside a full line of groceries, hardware and drygoods, the Imperial Oil agency, propane, and a "Massey Harris" agency most of the time. Beside that, Jack kept a back-hoe which installed a lot of the water and sewer systems in the neighborhood, to mention one of many services provided.

We never could have managed, if it had not been for employees like Len Morrison, who kept Jack's trucks on the road day and many nights for fourteen



Bird Family Picture.

years, and who also worked on most of Jack's other projects. Then there were clerks like Kay Zylla who was with us for ten or eleven years, Nettie Letersky, Marilyn Haugland, and Hil. Lightfoot. There was a long line of kitchen help and "extra" men who looked after some of the outside work, and they should all be mentioned because many were invaluable, but I am afraid of omitting someone who shouldn't be, if the list were extended, but Nancy Baduik must be mentioned here.

One of Jack's theories was that everyone should be able to raise their own fish, and to that end we were thrown into a great flap many springs when he would bring in a "fish truck" from Washington. These fish had been pre-sold to interested farmers, who would then arrive on the stated day to pick up the fingerlings or larger fish, as the case might be. In order to bring in the truck, a certain number of thousands of fish had to be sold, so it took a lot of pre-selling to accomplish this. He would stock our own dug-out and private lake. He really did raise a lot of very fine fish, to our boys' and his delight, but it never became the secondary industry he thought it should.

In the meantime, the family was going through school. The older girls attended Blueberry Mountain school for a few years, then went to Blueberry Creek where the small schools were consolidated. The others started at Blueberry Creek and all of them went on to complete High School at Spirit River. In the summer they were kept busy with 4-H projects, church camps, D.V.B.S., swimming lessons at the lake, etc. — it all went by in a flash, it seems.

Jack had his first heart attack in December 1972. It didn't slow him down at all, in spite of my protests. He was very active in promoting the sawmill and then was engaged in a hay-buying program when the fatal attack came in August of 1973.

Further crisis came to the family when the entire store, contents, and our living quarters were burned in September of the same year. We were fortunate to escape at 3 a.m. one night with scarcely any clothes on our backs, but no one was injured. I will always remember with much gratitude how very helpful friends, family, and neighbors were at that time. The very next day we all had clothes to wear, food to eat, and even a holiday trailer in which to live. Shortly thereafter our Mennonite friends brought in equipment and cleaned up the horrible mess left by the fire.

Our assets were now one dilapidated Imperial Oil truck which Bernie Olsen continued to herd down the road, and one very makeshift post office. It didn't seem much of an incentive to stay — but with continued help and support, we did just that. Nettie and Nick Letersky helped me re-establish in two old buildings that we had formerly used for warehouses, and we were in grocery store business again by March of 1974. With the patronage of most of our former customers, and much help from my loyal staff, we had a good business again. Murray stayed with us for a year or so, then left for greener pastures, leaving Vance who had finished high school, to drive truck and look after the oil business. He too decided to go back for further education, so Ray Barkman drove the truck until I turned the Imperial Oil business over in 1976. Computers had entered the picture, and initially were so confusing, it was just the last straw. Besides, we were now forced to charge interest which we had never done.

The old buildings had been barely adequate, especially in winter, and the work-load, was compounded by lack of space, so when Alex Graham proposed a new large store, and asked to take over the business, I agreed. On May 1, 1979 we moved into



much easier surroundings two miles west of the old Blueberry Mountain corner, on the Moonshine Lake Road.

Bonnie had married Bob Jackson, and they farm near Calgary. They have nearly as many projects going on down there, as Jack had up here, plus their two daughters, Jodie and Tannis . . . Valerie graduated from the University Hospital of Edmonton as a nurse, then obtained her degree in B.Sc. Nursing. She has travelled a lot, but now has her own home in Calgary also, from which she works . . . Murray had started an insulation business in Grande Prairie, after considerable travel, but this was cut short by his death in a car accident December 1980 . . . Erin obtained a Master's degree in Sciences, then married Gerald Inglis who played professional football for the B.C. Lions and Winnipeg Blue Bombers. They now live in Edmonton . . . Vance is employed in the Oil Patch out of Grande Prairie where he presently lives, but he still plays ball with the **Blueberry Bombers!** . . . That leaves Colleen still at home with me, holding down the old Blueberry Mountain corner.

"Man's goings are of the Lord: How can a man then understand his own way?" Proverbs 20:24



Birds Store and Post Office.

David Carlton Bozarth

Dave was born in Baker City, Oregon, on November 21, 1889. At age fifteen he chose the trade of blacksmith, and trained in Molson, Washington in 1904. In about 1913 he came over the Edson Trail and settled in the Sexsmith District. Dave built a blacksmith shop in Sexsmith in 1916, where he was later joined by Nels Johnson, a blacksmith who had worked in Edson. Nels Johnson eventually took over the shop in Sexsmith and in 1928 Dave moved to his farm northwest of Sexsmith, where he built another small blacksmith shop, and continued shoeing horses and oxen, and sharpening plow shares.

Dave moved to Blueberry Mountain in 1942 where he worked in a makeshift shop until about 1944, when an acreage was purchased from Dan Galbraith and a new shop built. There were no welders in the area, so he forge-welded plow axles, tractor blocks, etc., and his shop was a busy centre for all the farmers in the surrounding area. Dave retired in Blueberry Mountain and died there on September 26, 1970 at the age of 80.

Dave's Family

Iner (1914) is now retired and lives in Kelowna with his wife Leona. He has three daughters: Margaret who now lives in Oregon; Jean of California, and Loretta of Kelowna. He had five grandchildren.

Carl (1916) or "Chief" as he is better known as, lives at Fourth Creek where he farms and works for the Department of Highways. He and his wife Mona have one daughter Gaynell and one grandson.

Doris (1918) lives in Spirit River where she is retired.

James (1920-1923)

Donald (1926-1932)

Nels (1928) married Elsie Iddins of Brownvale and lives in Berwyn. He is the manager of the Seed Cleaning Plant in Grimshaw. Nels and Elsie have five sons; Dwayne, Darryl, Craig, Kelly, and David.

Gerald (1932) "Jock", married Lillian Snobl of Sexsmith and they live north of Sexsmith where he farms and blacksmiths. They have six children and seven grandchildren:

Shirley (Lamoyne Hogg) has three children, Gerry (Judy Lunn) has three children, and Edith (Bill Wolfe) has one child. Sheila is married to Wayne Craibley, Floyd and Maxine are unmarried. All of Jock's family live in the Sexsmith District.

Martin (1943) is married to Glenis Borden of Hythe. They have two girls, Melissa and Tracy, and live in Whitehorse, Yukon, where Martin works as an electrician.

David (1948) "Juggy" is a welder and lives in Hope, B.C. He and Pearl have one daughter, Debra.

The Caryks

Emil Caryk remembers well, the excitement that overtook the small village of Solovia, in the province of Ukraine, on that spring morning of 1928. It was not only excitement, but curiosity and hope that stirred all the young men of the village. A diplomatic representative from the far away country of Canada had come to make an offer that few could afford to pass by. It seems that the government of Canada needed farmers to open and settle the rich farmlands of the West. The offer was simple enough. One hundred and sixty acres were given to each applicant, provided he was married and if he promised that once

arrived on his homestead, he would not leave it for one whole year, not even to the nearest town.

Emil applied and waited patiently, hoping to qualify. He married Julana Paschavich on Feb. 24, 1929, and two months later, word came of a homestead available for the newly married couple. With the help of friends and relatives, Emil and Julana scraped up the mighty sum of three hundred dollars for the fare needed to take them to Canada. They set sail on April 18, 1929 on the ship "Assonnia" of the Cunard Lines.

The trip over was long and rough. Everyone was seasick, even the crew. At one point, out of eight hundred passengers, only Emil and an eleven year old boy showed up for dinner. To this day, Julana claims never to have seen the sea from horizon to horizon, as she spent the whole trip, sick in her bunk. So rough was that trip that one death was attributed to seasickness and Emil witnessed a burial at sea, even though the crew had gone to great lengths to keep this quiet so as not to alarm the other passengers.

Finally on May 26, 1929, Emil and Julana arrived in Smoky Lake, Alberta. They were met by Nick Pilipchuk, a friend from their home village, who had come to Canada, a few months earlier.

The Caryks settled on their quarter section homestead, and supplemented their income by working for a few of the more established farmers of the area, for the grand sum of twenty-five cents a day. They spent two years in the Smoky Lake area and their first child, Michael, was born during this time.

Soon, however, came the news that some three hundred miles west, there was an area where the soil was rich and black, and it was being opened to homesteaders. Unable to resist the thought of farming such land, Emil packed their belongings and set out with his family to Blueberry Mountain. As luck would have it, his land was mostly under water; one large muskeg. Undaunted, he and his wife built a log house and set out to clear and drain the land. They were determined to make this their home.

Shortly after their arrival in Blueberry, a second child was born, Mary, their only daughter. The family endured all the hardships that come with pioneering a new land. Everything had to be done by hand, from hauling water to chopping trees. In spite of the extreme heat of the summers, the crippling cold of the winters, the mosquitoes and black flies, the worrisome illnesses without the benefit of doctors near by, the monotony of a diet that could not be helped because of lack of facilities and mostly because of the lack of money, the Caryk family survived. A third child, Thomas, was born.

In 1943, Emil sought to supplement his meagre income by going to work on the Alaska Highway. This left Julana to man the farm, with all its hardships, and to care for the children by herself. Tragedy struck in 1945. The small log house burnt and with it all, the Caryk's belongings. Fortunately, Emil had by then started building a grand new house, and so the family moved into the unfinished house, thankful for a roof over their heads.

Emil tells of the time he purchased a cow from a farmer north of Spirit River. It took him three days to



Early Family Picture.



Family Picture.

get that cow home, walking through the heavy bush, all the time fighting clouds of mosquitoes and always looking back for fear of hungry bears. But there were good times too. The hospitality that was accorded to all, the knowledge that friends and neighbors would rally around, should one need help. The long winter evenings when friends gathered to play cards and to tell stories. Ah those stories which could thrill you and chill you to the bone, as each storyteller tried to outdo the other with ghostly anecdotes. The children would huddle on the stairs, too frightened to go up to bed, and too frightened to stay and listen and yet not wanting the evening to end.

There were the school concerts, the community dances, and the socials and the weddings, the special religious occasions when it didn't matter what religion you belonged to . . . everyone went . . . no babysitters in those days!

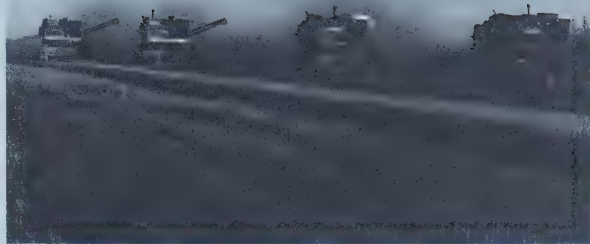
The Caryk children grew to be of school age and attended the usual one room school house with their friends. This meant going three miles by horseback in the summer and cross country skiing in the winter. All the students were expected to help the teacher with such janitorial duties as starting fires in the old airtight, sweeping floors, and hauling in the drinking water. Everyone pitched in.

In 1950, Mary became the envy of many of the girls in the district, when she was married to one of the most popular bachelors in the district, Roman Yanishewski. They settled on a farm near by and eventually presented Emil and Julana with 5 grandsons, Philip, Gordon, David, Clifford and Alan.

Mike and Tom remained on the farm to help their Dad. One year it was decided that it might be a good business venture to raise some turkeys. By December those birds were plump and beautiful . . . just right for butchering and selling for the Christmas season. You guessed it! Five days before Christmas, a blizzard hit the area. Everyone was snowed in. It might be said that the Caryks ate turkey in every form imaginable that winter . . . Roast turkey, fried turkey, smoked turkey, turkey soup, turkey fricasse . . . To this day that particular bird is not a favorite on the Caryk menu!

By now Michael had become interested in a young girl from St. Paul. Mike and Mary Hochechka were married and decided to settle in Blueberry and continue farming with Emil. In 1957, a new opportunity presented itself to the two brothers and they purchased the Cockshutt Farm Implement Agency, later known as the White Farm Equip. Agency. This partnership proved to be very successful and the brothers continued to expand both their farming and their business ventures.

A few years later, Tom married Helene Frey, who



Four Combines — The Modern Way.

had come to Spirit River to teach at the Separate School. During the next few years Emil and Julana had two more grandsons, born to Tom and Helene . . . Colin and Claude. The elder Caryks consider themselves very lucky to have relatively good health and to have their children living close by. Mary and Roman still farm in Blueberry, Mike and Tom have taken over and expanded the farming operations and continued to run a Farm Implement Dealership in Spirit River.

"Canada has been good to us" is a phrase one often hears from the Caryks, but upon reflection one realizes that people like Caryks . . . all those who pioneered this land have in turn been good to Canada.

A Tribute To The Jesse Caterers by Graeme Thomlinson

This book would scarcely be complete without mention being made of the contribution of the Caterers to the growth and development of the community of Blueberry Mountain.

Margaret (Milldrum) Caterer came to Blueberry with her mother, dad, and brother in 1918. They settled on SE 15-80-8-W6, and mention is made of the George Milldrums and their helpfulness and kindness to neighbors and newcomers in a great many of the histories. In the early days when anyone went to town they brought back the mail, and Mr. Milldrum and his family sorted it in their home, where the settlers picked it up. George Milldrum was made Postmaster in 1924, and Margaret was Assistant Postmaster. The Post Office was just in the Milldrum home, but in later years a separate building housed the Post Office.

Jesse Caterer came to the district in 1922 and homesteaded on NE 8-80-8-W6. Jesse and his brother Reg. worked out to make some money, and in 1924 put up \$200 and the settlement put up another \$200 to



Group at Caterers.

bring in a stallion, to improve the quality of the horses in the neighborhood.

Jesse and Margaret married in 1928, and their home was a focal point for meetings, get togethers, and social evenings. Jesse owned one of the first trucks in the district, and he and Dan Galbraith did most of the trucking — with the charge for hauling grain to Spirit River being 5 cents per bushel. Herb Keebler did the driving for Jesse, and one outstanding event back in the early '40's was when they took a truckload of settlers to the Beaverlodge Experimental Station for the day. The outing was a real event for people to get away from their farms for a day, and the trip and picnic were enjoyed by all.

In the fall of 1954, the farm of Jesse and Margaret was chosen by the Experimental Farm Service for an Illustration Station, and in 1955 work began. Different fertilizers were applied to various crops on 10-30 acre plots. Rows of new varieties of grain and grasses were grown to check their suitability for this area. Jesse also did a lot of experimenting as well.

The first two years a record was kept of everything that came from their garden, and any animals they killed for meat. All farm bills for gas, oil, hardware, etc., were also kept, and the books were collected at the end of each year. A well attended Field Day, put on by the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm was held every year for the local people, with speakers coming from Beaverlodge. After ten years, having served it's purpose, the station was closed



Jesse Caterer.

down, but Jesse kept the weather records for another eight years.

Jesse and Margaret had a beautifully kept yard and garden, that was the showplace of Blueberry for a number of years. However, as happens to all of us, they came to the place where they had to slow down somewhat, so in 1975 they sold their farm to Dennis Pegg, and retired to Vernon, B.C.

The Christensons — Joe, Tony, Carl and Melvin

by Arletta Hampton

The Christensons had all been born in Wisconsin, U.S.A. but when the boys grew up they decided to emigrate to Canada, where they had heard about the

good land for homesteading. They settled near Drumheller, Mel staying there to farm, Carl going to Greenlawn taking up a homestead. Tony had polio as a lad, so he went to Greenlawn to live with Carl. He was a good mechanic so went to Dewberry where he worked in a garage until 1950 when he moved to Blueberry. Joe started wandering around the Western States and Canada, and from there he went to Alaska, coming through the Peace River country, where he decided to settle down. In the early 30's when Joe returned to Blueberry, he started trapping in the winter and working for some of the farmers in the summer. He finally bought some land from the Hudson Bay Co., S.W. ¼ of 17 T. 80, built himself a log cabin, which is still standing today.

When Tony came in '50, he took a homestead N.E. 18 T. 80. He worked with Joe for 10 years, then retired to Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River, where he still lives. In the meantime, Carl had sold out and gone back to Drumheller, where he owned some land. He and Melvin sold out and came to Blueberry, Mel bought Joe's homeplace. The four brothers lived and worked together till Carl moved into the Lodge.

Joe had bought more Hudson Bay land in 1947, the west half of 28. In 1965, Mel, Joe and Tony sold some of their land to Bob Hampton and Joe and Mel moved to the north half. After improving this site, they decided to retire. Mel went to Creston to live with his sisters, Claire and Nellie. Joe sold his land to Ron Wedman. Joe did a little travelling, then returned to Spirit River to live at the Lodge a short while before passing away February 5, 1980.

William Franklin Collins **by daughter Elsie Porterfield**

William Franklin Collins, better known in the area as "Shorty", came to help survey the Blueberry Mountain area in 1919-1920, and filed on the north half of 26-80-8-6. He returned to Calgary and in February of 1921 married Jessie Clowes. They came to live in the area in late 1921, and their log home consisted of two rooms. The partition was made with boards taken from packing cases they used to bring their belongings in. The walls of the log house were chinked with dry moss. The floor was boards, under which was a cellar where they kept their vegetables and other supplies, to keep them as cool as possible. They used wood stoves and coal oil lamps, and of course had the little biffy out back. Water was hauled from creeks or dugouts in barrels for household use, and in winter people usually melted snow in barrels which were situated close to the wood heater. Washing was done on a scrub board and tub for many years. White cottons were put in a boiler of water and boiled for a while to keep them white. Travelling to

Spirit was done with team and sleigh in winter months when roads were frozen. Supplies for several months were brought in at this time.

Their son Roy was born in Spirit River on May 28th, 1922. At the age of three weeks he was taken home on horseback, the only way of travel at that time of year. It was a distance of about 30-35 miles. Settlers would take turns once a month and go on horseback, a three day trip, to town and bring out the mail. Whoever went, would notify the other settlers what day he would be back, and everyone would gather at his place that evening for a party and dance, and to get their mail. This was repeated every month till Mr. Milldrum later became postmaster.

The veterans of the first World War got together and built a log hall, which turned out to be built on the road allowance, so there was a bend in the road. Dances and Armistice celebrations were held here, and as the settlement grew, it became the first school. The first teacher was Miss Walker who later became Mrs. Victor Mitchell. At that time school started when roads became passable in the spring, and ran till it became very cold, usually in November or early December. The winter months were holiday time. This practice was carried on until 1939.

In order to hear the first radio we had, we had to use head phones. We were always pleased when company came, as we were allowed to take turns listening to the radio while mom and dad visited. Dad bought a threshing machine and tractor in 1927, and it took a week to bring it in from Spirit River. He also had one of the first cars in the district, a Model T. Ford. He did a lot of blacksmith work, and also had a grain crusher. He crushed grain for flour, and also animal feed, for many of the settlers who came many miles to get their grain crushed.

He built a closed in sleigh and put a stove in it. This was pulled by a team of horses, with the reins coming through small holes under the front window. The sleigh had a side door and a window in the back, and one seat under which some wood was stored. This was used for transportation to school when school operated all winter. There was a barn at the school for the horses, and each family supplied their own feed for the horses. All grain produced on the farm was taken by team and sleigh to sell in Spirit River, until the 1940's when trucks came into use. Cattle that were sold were herded into town by men on horseback, and someone went with a team and wagon to carry hay, and food for the men for the trip. There were two overnight stopping places on the way to town, where men and horses could spend the night.

In the Second World War, Dad served in the army, and on his return moved to Richmond, B.C. in 1947

where he worked in a cannery until his illness. He passed away in November 1955, and mother passed away in Spirit River in October 1965. They are both buried in Forrest Lawn Memorial Cemetery, Vancouver, B.C.

Their family consisted of four. A son Roy, now living in Perth, Australia. He has four sons. Daughters — Elsie in Spirit River, has a daughter and son. Marjorie in Canby, Oregon, U.S.A., has a daughter and son. Irene in Richmond, B.C. has three daughters and a son.

The Cottons

Jesse and Alf Cotton were born in England and came to Manitoba, Canada in 1913.

In 1915 Jesse married Gertrude McPherson and bought a quarter of land that he farmed until 1930. His wife passed away in 1926, and they had three sons and a daughter.

Alf and Jack Gould had been up to Peace River country in 1929, and they felt it was the land of opportunity, so Jesse sold his farm and came as far as Spirit River with a carload of cattle — 7 cows, 1 Shorthorn bull and a team of horses. He also brought a Holstein cow and a team of horses for Alf. He brought a carload of machinery and household effects. From Spirit River they went to Moose Creek, now known as Gordondale in July 1930.

During the summer the four children Lucy, Joe, George and Ray, ages 14 to 6 stayed in a tent 12 x 16 put up on a four foot wall built of boards. They milked the cows and churned the butter while Jesse and Alf put up hay at Moonshine Lake. Ike Nellis, Charlie Keyser, Bob and Allie Menzies helped start their log house. Oscar Swenson helped a lot, making a door and putting windows in, that had been brought from Manitoba.

One of Alf's horses died in October, also one of Jesse's, so they decided to move to Whitburn to be closer to the hay. They lived in the Bob Scott Sr. house and used his barn for the winter.



Cottons Family Picture.

In the spring of 1931 they moved the house Percy Hamilton had on his farm to Jesse's homestead at Blueberry Mountain. That summer the bedrooms were built, and a barn up enough to shelter animals for the winter. We had no garden as the land was just broken, and traded butter to McCullough for potatoes. Shorty Collins gave us turnips and carrots, so with moose meat, we managed to eat.

Our closest neighbors were Jim Stone and Mr. and Mrs. Lomas to the west a mile and a quarter. Jack Goulds were one and a half miles northwest and Mason Woods to the east. Ralph and Florence Jewett and Reg. Ellwood were a mile and a quarter south. There was no road from Reg. Ellwood's corner north, just our wagon trail north. This had a big mud hole on it and there was also a creek to cross, over which they built a bridge later on. The mosquitoes and little black flies (no see ums) were so bad, men made veils out of cheesecloth to wear over their hats so they could work. We had no screens for our door or windows, so would make a smudge in a pail and smoke them out of the house (and ourselves too.)

The boys broke four oxen and hauled all the manure on to the garden with steel wheel trucks. They also used them to haul our winters wood from the land Jesse was clearing. It was Joe's and George's job to cut the wood with a crosscut saw or bucksaw, and Ray's job to get it in the house. We also melted snow in a wooden barrel, and if it was not kept filled with snow it would dry out at the top and we had running water on the floor, so we learned to keep it full of snow every day.



Oxen Power, 1930.

One day Lucy hollered through the window at Ray to get some more snow in, and he hit at the window at her and broke the window. Ray ran around the corner but met his dad coming and was given a smarting warning not to let that happen again. In the fall the water was scarce as we didn't have our dugout made yet, so the boys would take the stone boat with two 5 gallon cream cans and wooden barrel churn, and get water from the creek. Joe would dip the water into a pail and hand it up to George and Ray to put in the barrel churn and cream cans. The hole was fairly steep and Joe fell in one time. George and Ray were up on the bank yelling "Climb Joe, climb".

Jesse kept house as well as driving the horses for all field work, until one fall a bear scared the horses and they ran away, then Alf splurged and bought a Fordson tractor. Jesse would bake bread, wash clothes on the washboard, and wash the floor and clean the stove on Saturday. He would go to the store for the mail and groceries in the afternoon. He could bake as good bread as the best of us, also could put a patch on his clothes with the sewing machine. He never went out very much, but would come down to Watino and stay for two or three weeks with Lucy and her family and visit his sons from there. He said he always enjoyed it, as he didn't have any cooking and cleaning to do.

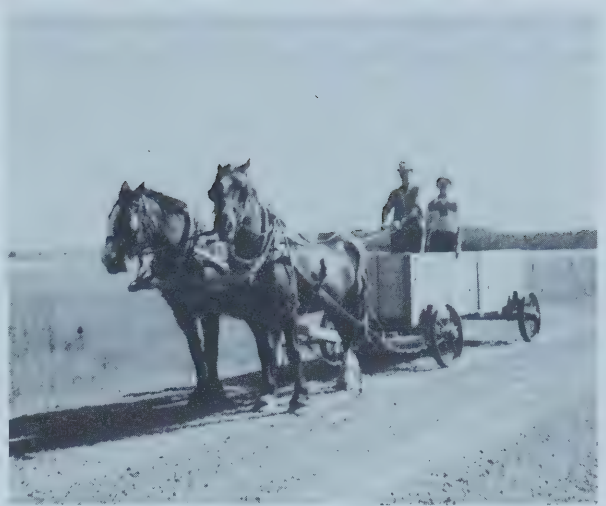
Jesse passed away in January 1963 at the age of 73. Alf then came to Watino and stayed with Lucy and her husband until he went to England in December 1963 and stayed with a brother there. He came back to Watino in June 1970 and stayed with Joe and his wife until he went into Pleasantview Lodge in December 1970. He passed away in January 1977 at the age of 89.

Lucy and her husband live in Watino. They had two daughters and a son. They also have two granddaughters and a grandson. Joe was wounded badly overseas and was never in good health after. He passed away in May 1977. George has a farm and a cat., and does brush cutting and piling in the winter. Ray and his wife also farm and raise cattle at Watino. They have three daughters and five sons, and also one granddaughter and seven grandsons.

John and Emma Doetzel

by Tina Doetzel

John Doetzel was born on April 28, 1908 in Fulda, Saskatchewan to Frank and Gertrude (nee Speechkin) Doetzel. He was the fourth child of a family of fourteen children. His father was a licensed Veterinarian and Blacksmith, and his mother was a District Nurse. They lived on a ½ section of land there. The following is John's recollection of his life:



Ron and Joe.

"I never did go to school. When I was very small, my parents found out that I had asthma really bad, and therefore was always a sickly child. They kept me home from school because of this, and I was always trailing after my dad as he went about his veterinary and blacksmith work. He taught me a lot about both of these trades, which was a great help to me later, as I did a lot of both types of work when I moved to the north.

Where we lived in Saskatchewan, it was always windy and dusty, and this really aggravated my asthma, making it very difficult to breathe almost all the time. I thought that if I came to Alberta, to the Peace country, my health might improve, so I left home in the early '20's to come this way.

I came to Fort. St. John, B.C., in 1929, and worked as a blacksmith there. In 1930, I worked on the new hospital in Fort. St. John until it was finished. I continued doing blacksmith work until 1932 when I went back home to Saskatchewan. I had very little trouble with my asthma when I was living in Fort. St. John, but as soon as I returned to Saskatchewan, I had trouble breathing again. I stayed there for two years, but came back to Fort. St. John in 1934, when I worked as a blacksmith again. I also drove a freight wagon in the Fort. St. John area, coming to Dawson Creek, Grande Prairie, and Spirit River with freight.

It was during this period that I met Emma Greene. Emma was a young widow who had been married to Freddy Greene, who died a few years previously, of pneumonia. She had three little girls: Mae born January 6, 1928, Beatrice (Molly) born July 6, 1931, and Eileen born in 1933. Emma was the daughter of Modeste and Annie (nee Wanyandi) Tes-tawich. Both of her parents died in the flu epidemic of

1918. They had five children, but only two survived, Emma and her older sister Sarah. Emma was raised at the Catholic mission at Girouxville when her parents died. After she was widowed, she would live part-time with her sister Sarah in Rolla, B.C., and part-time with the Miskinacks in Blueberry Mountain.

In 1936 Emma and I got married and we moved to Blueberry Mountain. We lived south of the Blueberry Mountain store, and I worked for the Ellisons, Walter Mitchell, and Reg. Caterer, doing farm work, from 1936 to 1942, during the summer and fall. It was during this time, on November 23, 1936 that we had a daughter, Annie.

Jim Sidor had a sawmill in Blueberry Mountain, and I logged for him in the winter. Jim had the mill for five or six years when he sold it to "Spinny". I never did know him by any other name. Don't even know if he had a different one, 'though he must have. Spinny had the mill for quite a number of years, and I logged for him also. When I started logging, I had four men working for me, but by the time Spinny sold the mill to Parks Brothers, I had sixteen men working for me. We cut the logs with a crosscut saw, skidded the logs with horses to the skidway, then loaded them on a sleigh to take to the landing at the mill.

In 1942 we moved to the Al Grenache farm on the hill. I rented this quarter from Grenache and the quarter south of it from Hiram Walker. I also rented a half section from William Tarr. When we moved to the hill, we had a team of horses, Babs and Jill, a cow named Daisy, and a few pigs and chickens. I worked for the sawmill during the weekdays in the winter and on weekends I cut wood and ice for the school, store,

and District Nurse. Off season, I cut poles and fence posts for the district. I didn't have a License, but learned enough from my father to do veterinary work in the district, and anywhere else I was called.

I later purchased the land from Al Grenache and Hiram Walker. I broke the land with horses and cleared the brush by hand. I built a blacksmith shop and would sharpen shares for everyone in the district.

In the early '50's, Parks Brothers moved to Prince George. When they left I logged for various smaller sawmills, owned by fellows such as Dan Galbraith, "Unk" Cramer, Bill Kosowan, and Walter Tharp. I think it was around 1957 that I quit logging.

During this period, Emma and I had three more children. Our first son, Ronald Frank was born March 11, 1944. A daughter Caroline Lorraine was born on June 6, 1947, and our last child, a son, Joseph John was born on March 24, 1949.

I was the last farmer in Blueberry Mountain to farm with horses, usually having twenty-six to thirty head of horses at one time. They were sometimes a curse and sometimes a godsend. I remember one time, I hitched a team of horses to the binder, and was making my outside round cutting grain. I just got to the end of the field when a big ol' she-bear jumped up out of the grain in front of the horses. Well, them critters got so spooked that they cut across the middle of the field at a tight gallop, with me hanging on for dear life itself, to the binder, trying to keep the front up enough so it wouldn't gouge into the ground, knocking me forward and off, to be sheaved and tied. Those sheaves were shooting out of the binder as fast as bullets, those damn horses were going so fast. They never stopped till we got to the other end of the field.

Another time though, they were a godsend. I was plowing with this team, when they just up and stopped dead in the middle of the field. They wouldn't budge an inch, no matter how I hollered and licked them. I finally went round to the front of them, to give them a pull and get them moving, when I saw Caroline who was just a tiny tyke, sleeping in the furrow in front of them. That's why they wouldn't move.

I eventually sold the horses though, and bought a tractor to work with and a truck to travel with. Still kept one horse though, old Paddy. Just couldn't get rid of every single one. Paddy is still on the farm, and still remembers me whenever I go out there.

I used to have a lot of pigs too. Made most of my money from pigs. Made a lot of moonshine too. In fact, I made it for years, but they never caught me till 1947. Had to bring their dogs out to find it too. I was sentenced to six months in jail that time, and was still in jail when Emma gave birth to Caroline.



Wedding of Ron and Tina, 1968.

Emma's girls were growing up and leaving home. Eileen lived at the coast most of her life, because of a heart condition. Doctors said she couldn't survive here in the north. She married a Meredith there. Mae married Malcolm Miller in Calgary, and Molly married Danny Yaeger from Rolla. Eileen had one boy, Mae five girls, and Molly never had children.

A bit later, the children we had together were leaving home too. Annie married Tom O'Neill in 1956, but they later divorced. She is now married to Frank Persson, and they live in Edmonton. Annie has no children.

Caroline married Wes Lillico in July, 1966. She lives in Grande Prairie now and has one boy, Darryl. Darryl was born in 1967.

Ron married Tina Kozij, also from Blueberry Mountain, daughter of John and Susie Kozij. They live in Spirit River and bought my farm in 1976. They have one child, a daughter, Sheila, born in June 1969.

In 1970, Eileen passed away in Port Coquitlam, B.C., then on November 29, 1971, Molly passed away at Fort. St. John. She was predeceased by her husband Danny in October 1961. On February 2, 1975 Emma passed away in Grande Prairie. She was staying with Mae and her family when she passed away.

I sold the farm to Ron and Tina in 1976. I had been in a motor vehicle accident in August of that year, and got pretty banged up, sustaining a skull fracture, had a fracture of my arm and leg. I stayed with Caroline that winter, and then bought a house in Spirit River and moved there in May 1977.

On December 22, 1979, Joe was killed in a motor vehicle accident at Blueberry Mountain, right on the hill where he was raised. He was living in Spirit River at the time.



John Doetzel Family Group, 1978.

Yessir, a lot has come and gone since I first moved up here. Times have changed, and people live faster now. I suppose it's for the better, but I still think fondly of the days of horses and moonshine."

Ernest Dunham — 1892-1969

Ernest Dunham was a good natured easy-going person who came to Blueberry Mountain from England in the early thirties. On land bought from Harry Hanrahan, he built a shack and a barn. A small field was laboriously cultivated, as most of his quarter, northwest of the store was covered with big trees. Ernie did carpenter work for the farmers, and spent a number of years helping Mr. Hanrahan. Many homes and farms throughout the community show his handiwork. Sometimes he was hired by the School Board for general maintenance work.

After World War II Ernie built a two bedroom cottage to welcome his sister, Mrs. Alice Wilkinson from England. They stayed at Esselink's and did chores one winter. Transportation for them was a tractor, and they did visit around the neighborhood.

Ernie retired after his sister's death. He did some woodwork as a hobby, making a tiny engine and a chest of drawers among other things. On a rare trip to Vancouver he was involved in a car accident, from which he never really recovered, and he died in Spirit River Hospital.

Henry Earl

Hank was raised on a farm near Millbrook, Ont. He came out west to Alberta in 1971 looking for work with the idea of buying land of his own. His first job was with a farmer in the Lethbridge area, from there he went to construction work and finally hired on with an oil rig. Hank worked with the oil rigs for a number of years, winning several awards for "Safe-



Beth and Henry Earl.

ty". Between jobs and time off he traveled around Alberta and Saskatchewan looking for the land he wanted to buy.

In 1976 he came up to the Peace River country, liked it, and decided to stay. He took out a homestead, north of Bear Creek, S.W. 1-81-8 W6, then bought, 3 quarters from Bob Hampton, which had originally been the Christenson brothers. He bought a "Cat" and did his own brushing and breaking on the homestead as well as on the land he bought. After a couple of years, Hank bought a quarter from Dennis Pegg that bordered his east line in Blueberry. The new store was built on this quarter at the corner.

In 1978 Hank married Beth Hampton, and then on the twenty-first of Feb. 1981 they became the proud parents of a son, Jace.

The George Esselinks — by Stella

George Esselink arrived in Blueberry Mountain in 1927 after spending three years working his way across Canada. He came from Holland. He filed on a homestead, became a Canadian Citizen, and earned the title to his land. His brother Tom, came in 1928. The two brothers farmed rented land near Spirit River for two years. The rest of the family arrived from Holland in 1929. At the completion of a log house on George's homestead, they all moved to it.

There is much to learn when coming from the city to a frontier farm in a new country. Young Henry and Dick found an animal under a log pile. They decided to chase it out with a stick. WHOOPS! WHEW! That black and white kitty caused Henry to bury his clothes.

It was depression years. There were anxious times when payment on machinery was due, with wheat nineteen cents a bushel. By now the other boys wanted land too. Dad, Mother, Tom, Bert, Charlie, Jack, Amy, Dick, Violet, and Henry moved across Hamelin Creek. On their homesteads they broke fifty acres, built a house, barns, corrals. Accidents happen even on the homestead thirty miles from a doctor. Henry broke his leg. He had to be packed down one side of the canyon and up the other side in the rain, then taken a couple of miles by team to where Mr. Wm. Collins waited with a car to take him to the doctor in Spirit River. Dad fashioned a pair of useable crutches for Henry. The bridge, laborously built with brawn, horses, and logs washed out with every high water, so back across the creek to a farm Bert bought from Tom Meester.

A steel wheeled tractor turned the sod for fields at home and for some neighbours. Grain and stock was hauled twenty-eight miles to railroad by horse drawn sleigh. A supply of staples was brought back to last all summer. As better roads were built, trucks re-

placed horses but the railroad came no closer. Folks from Rolla and Dawson Creek hauled to Spirit River. Many a memorable incident occurred. One I heard:

An esteemed member of Blueberry Mountain Settlement was in Spirit River conversing with the hotel keeper. He laid his new fur cap on the counter. A mischief among the audience noticed the absorption in the conversation and gently took the new cap. Where? — to the barber. After objections the barber sheared the cap, which was replaced on the counter where the owner was oblivious to its absence. There was rather a large explosion by owner and audience when the shorn cap was discovered. However the gang took a collection for a new cap.

Charlie and Jack worked away from home. The rest of the family farmed successfully until 1940 when they moved to Lacombe.

George married Estella Coykendall in 1940. They continued to improve their farm in Blueberry Mountain. A house was built for ice to supply drinking water and keep food cool. The water for stock and washing came from dug-outs. A barrel near the stove, kept full of clean snow, held a supply of water for the house in winter. The homestead cow supplied milk, cream and butter. Meat was largely wild. From big gardens came vegetables, potatoes, small fruit. Wild fruit was picked as well. Canning food was big business.

One vivid memory is of a raw boned Scotsman, Tom Gillespie. He was a bachelor, a friend of the neighborhood children where they could go for a cookie and a visit. He was no farmer, but served willingly as he could. He walked miles and miles collecting funds for the school board, the nurse's home, treats for the childrens' concert, the United Farmers Union, etc. When his brother and sister came to visit him we made their acquaintance. This led to a most pleasureable visit in Nairn, Scotland for us. In jest Tom was called the "Earl of Blueberry". The name stuck. We also had a Duke of Donuts.

How well I remember getting up on a clear frosty morn, the house was so cozy and warm. Out the east window we watched the dawn. A column of smoke reached skyward from a silhouetted house. We knew the Rod Macdonalds were astir. We could see each others windows, and on occasion would hang a towel out as a signal. During the earliest years Mrs. Macdonald and I would attend meetings in a buggy pulled by their big blue roan horse, Don. Mrs. Macdonald's umbrella sheltered us from sun, wind or rain, and Don didn't mind at all. Later we travelled by car.

From a snug three roomed house heated with wood, developed a seven roomed home with modern facilities. No longer did we signal with a towel, we phoned. An equipped workshop, a machine shed,

plenty of granaries were added. Our yard had trees for shade, shelter, snow fence. More dug-outs provided a plentiful supply of water for house and stock in the field.

George and Stella have two daughters. Grace was born in 1943; Dalphy in 1946. Many afternoons saw two small girls with their dog trudging across the field with tea for Daddy. He welcomed the break. Girls as well as the dog were rewarded with a drink of tea, maybe a cookie.

Jack Esselink returned from war in 1945, in time to help with harvest. He bought a farm to establish a home for his bride who arrived from Holland December 1946, with their daughter Jacqueline.

Harvest always meant long hours in the field, but one night they were later than usual. When the hired man arrived he told me he and Vern Galbraith had taken George to the hospital. He had gotten his hand in a sprocket wheel in the combine. Dr. Law did a splendid job setting those mangled fingers. Never as good as before, the hand was saved and useable.

Relaxation was picnics, ball games, dances, shows, badminton, school meetings, agricultural meetings and demonstrations, trips to visit relatives, friends, countryside. The area now had a general store, a blacksmith shop, a garage, a hall, a District Nurse, a school, and a church.

Grace and Dalphy attended Blueberry Mountain School three and a half miles away. For six winters the family made an annual trek to a house nearer the school so the girls could walk. The first year we moved, the snow was very deep. That same year seismograph crews explored the area for signs of oil. They kept the road open but it became a tunnel. The only way to meet a vehicle was at someones gate. Trucks were back and forth along the school road daily but there was not one accident. The Blueberry Mountain School closed in 1958. The children were bussed to Blueberry Creek School, then to Spirit River for high school.

George took his turn serving for the United Farm Union, the School Board, The Seed Growers Association, the Central Peace Feeders Association, etc. Stella worked with the Goodwill Club (organized by Mrs. Penny), the Womens Missionary Society, Sunday School, post office, the school. Grace and Dalphy were part of the Sunday School, Young Peoples Society, 4H Grain and Garden Clubs.

1955 saw Mother Esselink, Amy, Richard, Henry and family return to farm in Blueberry. On July first twenty-one people arrived at our place to search for land to farm. None of those stayed, but gradually settlers came and made good farms from virgin territory across the Hamelin Creek. Mother Esselink passed away in 1966.

George switched from a cow-calf operation to straight feeders bought from Grande Prairie Auction Mart and resold as finished stock. The profit margin was small and the work great, so the operation was terminated. Brush patches were turned into fields, larger machinery used on the farm. No longer were cows milked, pigs or chickens fed. Only a team of pet horses was kept for a while then given to a neighbor who would use and care for them.

Grace took her nurses training at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton and earned her R.N. in 1964. She continued to work there. She married Albert Bjalek. They have two sons and reside in Edmonton.

Dalphy furthered her education in Calgary and Montreal, majoring in social service. After working for a year, she started on a trip around the world. She stopped to work in Australia. There she married Trevor Vanzell and continues to reside there.

Jack, Corrie and family: Jacqueline, Shirley, Sidney, sold their farm at Blueberry Mtn., and moved to Kelowna.

Richard Esselink sold his farm in 1975. He retired to Grande Prairie and married Helen Giesbrecht.

Henry, Reta and family remain in the district. Hiram does the farming. Catherine is secretary of Spirit River School Division. Bert married a Calgary girl, and they have two sons. At present they live in Calgary.

Telephones, welders, big machinery made the farming a lot more convenient. Farming was George's life, but the time comes to change. He still enjoys a few days on the farm each year haying or whatever. George and Stella sold their farm in 1972, and retired to Creston, B.C.



Mr. and Mrs. Dick Esselink.



G. Esselink Family — Christmas in Australia 1979.



Senior Esselink Family.

The Autobiography of Harold T. Fitzsimons

I was born and raised in Delia, a small town 30 miles northeast of Drumheller. Most of my life has been spent on the farm.

In 1939 I married Irene May Danbrook, and together we farmed for 2 years at Delia, where we had poor crops, and received low prices for our farm produce. We then moved to Drumheller, and since the war was on, it was quite easy to get a job. I got a job in a coal mine as a laborer. I got good wages of \$5.80 for an 8 hour shift, and there were deductions for union dues, doctors insurance, washroom facilities, miners lamp rent, tools, and unemployment insurance. I did not realize until after I got the job that



First Homestead.

it was war essential work, and I was frozen there by government regulations for the duration of the war, or until the mine slowed down to three days a week. After two years of hard work in the mine, I was able to quit, and get a non-essential job with the municipality of Morrin. A month later I joined the army, but while I was in basic training I came down with rheumatic fever which shortened my army career quite a bit. After that we moved to Morrin, and I went back to working for the municipality, operating machines for six years. At that time Irene and I had a family of three, Mary, Shirley, and Fred.

Irene and I talked it over, and decided we would like to try farming again. At that time good farm land was worth \$25 to \$50 per acre, and since we could not borrow money, we decided to take a homestead at Spirit River. The cost to lease a half section (320 acres) of bush was \$5.00, and at least ten acres had to be brushed and broken per year, with one-eighth share of the crop going to the government. After five years, if 80 acres were in seed bed condition, title could be bought for about \$300. We got the homestead in 1948, and the following summer we loaded up our 1928 Chev. car and came to the homestead which was N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 36-79-7-6, and the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 1-80-7-6. That year we broke 25 acres and cleared another 40. In the fall we went back to Morrin and I worked for the municipality for the winter. We were just ready to leave when the motor of the car started leaking water into the cylinder. It could not be repaired, so we had to buy another motor block. It took all day to find one, which we bought for \$5, then got St. Jean in Rycroft to rebore it to fit the pistons of the original motor for \$8, and some gaskets for \$1.50. We installed the motor, and in two days were on our way to Morrin. The 600 mile drive took us about three days.

The following spring we had all our belongings shipped by train to Spirit River.

The first two years I worked part time for Dave Ross as a mechanic and welder. Since there was no road for the last three miles to the homestead, and it was eight miles to the Blueberry school, we bought a small house in Spirit River so the children could go to school. At that time there were no school buses, and everyone had to find their own way to the little white school house. There was a hospital in Spirit River but Dr. Law was the only doctor until the 1950's. There was no gravel on the highway to Spirit River or to Dawson Creek, and none to Edmonton except from Athabaska, which was the only road to Edmonton. The roads across the creek north of Spirit River were just bulldozed trails, but there were wooden bridges. There were no settlers across the Bear Creek just north of Blueberry, but there were a few about 6 miles east of there. At that time Jack Bird owned the small store at Blueberry, and Dave Bozarth had a small blacksmith shop. These were quite important because the roads were mostly trails, and a lot of people did not have a car or truck. There were only horses and wagons and the odd farmer had a nice buggy.

Spirit River consisted of only ten town blocks and the three east blocks had only about six houses on them, with the rest being vacant lots. Park Bros. had the saw mill in the bush about 20 miles west of Spirit River and the planer mill ½ mile west of Spirit River. Most of their employees were homesteaders. A few years later Park Bros. went into road construction and contracting, which added more payroll for homesteaders and enabled them to clear more land.

It was in 1951 that our last son Willis was born, and in 1952 Pete Kozuback and I bought a new cat tractor. We worked for oil companies, government roads, and cleared land throughout the district. Pete and I worked together until 1959. By that time we had accumulated quite a lot of machinery. When we dissolved our company we each took half of the equipment. With my half I bought out Tommy Wright's garage with the International Harvester corporation. Earl Hoover bought a half share in the business, and two years later I bought his share and sold a share to Bill Waknuk and a share to Alex Babuik. We were getting well established in the business by 1969 when the garage with complete contents burned to the ground. We decided to dissolve the company, because we would have to go too far in debt to rebuild and start over.

In 1963 our last daughter Marie was born, giving Irene and I five children, two boys and three girls. In 1969 we bought the south half of 34 and 35-80-8-6, and went farming full time. The first few years were hard, as our crops were badly frozen the first two. Since grain was hard to sell, we hauled our grain to



Fitzsimmons Family.

Dawson Creek and shipped it to a feed mill at Abbotsford, B.C. After that we had a couple of very good crops and did really well financially. In 1976 I had a heart attack and had to quit farming.

During the last year I was farming, I harvested the highest yield of rape of anyone who used Treflan weed chemical in this area. By doing this, my wife Irene and I won a three week all expense paid trip to Japan, including a few days in Hong Kong and Honolulu.

Our son Willis and his wife Debbie, with two children, Glory-Dawn and Danny, bought the farm and all the machinery, and are enjoying farm life. Mary, our oldest daughter lives in Calgary and has two children, Joanne and Richard. Shirley, our second daughter, lives in Coquitlam, B.C. She is married to Peter Gibb and has two children Johnny and Sandra. Fred, our oldest son is in the R.C.M.P. in Toronto. Marie, our youngest daughter is in her last year of high school at the Spirit River Secondary School. Irene and I still live in the same house we bought in 1950, although it has been completely remodelled since then.

Lloyd Galbraith

I was born in the Holy Cross Hospital, Spirit River on July 11, 1946, and lived in Blueberry Mountain all my life.

My father, Vernon James Galbraith was born at Gilbert Plains, Manitoba and came to Blueberry Mountain when he was fifteen years old. In 1930 he went to Montney, B.C., and homesteaded there.

My mother, Sylvia Philpott was born at Champion, Alberta, and came to the Peace River country with her parents in 1930. Vern and Sylvia met at Montney and were married there on November 10, 1938, then moved back to Blueberry Mountain in 1940.



Dan Galbraith.

Vernon James Galbraith

I came to Blueberry Mountain from Gilbert Plains, Manitoba, to live with my brothers Dan and Al., arriving in Spirit River March 15, 1928, and at Blueberry Mountain on March 17th. We lived on the Steve Keay place for about fifteen months.

On June 5, 1930 I moved to Montney, B.C., coming back to Blueberry September 7th, 1940. I trucked here and on the Alaska Highway for about four years.



Vern, Sylvia and Lloyd.



Darcey and Lloyd.

I started farming with my father at Whitburn, then later sold my land there and bought land in Blueberry Mountain where I now live.

In March 1976 I married Darcey Fitzpatrick, and we have a son, Barry James born August 16th, 1977.



Barry.

I bought Dan's farm and have lived here ever since. I also had three quarters of land in Whitburn and one half section in Blueberry from Bob Hagerman, later selling it to our son Lloyd who now lives there with his wife and son.

Early Community Life of Blueberry Mt. written by Tom Gillespie in 1947

This territory in 1919 was not even surveyed, but it had been recommended for Soldiers Settlement, and was supposed to be within fifteen miles of a railway. Now the railroad grades had been made from Spirit River to the B.C. boundary, but the rails were never laid and the bridges soon went to pieces. Today after 28 years we are still 25 miles from Spirit River and the end of steel.

This land had been held quietly for grazing cattle from south of town and they did not want it opened, so when some people came to Spirit River from U.S.A., and others from the East, they were informed that all was muskeg from Cache 1 through to Blueberry. These men went out 25 miles west of Spirit on the grade and cut a road northwest all the way to Blueberry, a distance of 25 miles. This was in 1918, and only two of them built a house. All but one went back to Spirit to work as they had to earn a living.

On the 25th of April 1919 two returned soldiers who had taken their tickets from England to the Peace River, arrived in Spirit River to take up land. What they knew about farming you could put in an envelope, and what they did not know would fill a big book. After enquiring where land was to be had and getting all different names of places, they decided to look at this Blueberry Mountain, as the name sounded good. Well, as luck would have it, this old gent who had stayed in there, was in town and he said, "Why not come along, but you will have to walk 50 mile, as I have only two small white ponies and they have all they can pull over that road". He should have said 'mud trail', as sometimes the water and mud was knee deep.

The first stop was camping under a spruce tree for the night with a good fire to keep warm, then next day after wading and hauling, Blueberry Mtn. was reached around 8 p.m. The old gent started lighting matches and setting fire to the grass, and soon a real fire was going. As the ground slopes to the east, it was a pretty sight, and no danger as he said, if the wind did not change. There was an unused building with some straw, and they decided to camp there while he went on to his own shack. The first experience was fire coming straight for the building, but with shovel and fork handy, and after some work and change of wind, all was safe. Next morning a trip to

the hill was made and five dollars per day paid to look at land to suit said pair, who did not know good land from bad, but they took a chance after two days, and were very lucky.

Then the rush started and the troops came in two by two, to look at said land. It finished up with one staying, and the first Brigade did not feel so bad about knowing nothing, as there were lots more like them. One had been a lawyer of sorts, another had studied for the clergy, another was a moulder, another a baker, another a collector, another a messenger, another a school teacher, another a city laborer, and some others from various trades. There were very few farmers, and those had worked for their fathers. They were all bachelors — only one lady, a Wai Widow. Now there was a shortcut to town, this was over a pack trail (18 miles to town), and many funny and queer things happened on this trail, as this was how the grub stakes were brought in the first two summers. One partner had to stay on the land as a squatter while the other went to town, and as Diamond Hitches were not known, lots of the packs slipped and the pack saddle and load were sometimes under the horse instead of on top. As the country was wet in those days, sometimes it was not very pleasant, as if one had only one horse he had to walk and lead the horse; some places up over the knees in water and mud, but the grub had to be got and the mail. What one would not do to get a piece of land.

Great was the relief when the surveyor came along in July and surveyed the land, but no filing was done until May, 1920.

Going back to the 50 mile 'Trail for Wagons', a few episodes should be told. One man bought a team and brought them over the pack trail, and at the same time he bought a second hand Sulky Plow. Some time later his partner hitched up the team to another man's wagon and started for town, but every time he came to a large mud hole one horse refused to go through. Having lots of patience, said Gent jumped down and grabbed the halter shank and walked ahead, and the horse followed. This happened all the way to town, and on arrival there the Livery man asked him how he ever got harness on said horse as he had been a race horse and had never had harness on him before. "So **that** is why I had to lead him through the mud", said our Teamster. After doing some shopping he went to look for the Sulky Plow, but did not know what it looked like. He asked the Livery man where it was and he was told it was behind the barn, but he could not find it and had to be shown.

On the return trip the same performance had to be gone through, but as a few neighbors were with him in the wagon, one of them volunteered to lead this horse through bad places and water two feet deep. At

one place he hit his foot on a stump and disappeared under water, so when he came up he was black, and his white teeth showing as he laughed.

One man had been a farmer in Saskatchewan, and one could admire the way he snaked his team through the timber — and it sure was a snake trail with curves and tight places to go through. This gent always seemed to be in a hurry and sure could swing a nasty line. Another man had a wild team that generally got home long before him, but sometimes they left a good part of the load scattered all along the trail. He would come walking along and ask “Did you see my team”? He did not worry much.

Returning to the trip home with the Sulky Plow, another funny incident took place as the two partners tried to put it in the ground to work. The levers were not put in right and they were stuck, but looking around they saw another gent a short distance away and hailed him. When he arrived the gent who admitted he did not know anything said “My partner knows all about a gang plow and a walking plow, but he knows nothing about a Sulky”. The other fellow sat down and laughed and he said “If you know about a gang, you know about a Sulky”. Was the other fellow’s face red?

Referring to the mail that was brought in over the pack trail on horseback: it was left originally at the shack at one of the first partners and then later at a more central place, where a kindly old gent and his wife agreed to hand it out to everyone. Later he became Postmaster to the settlement.

Another lively and funny incident took place the first summer, when six men decided to put up hay together. They decided to put the man who didn’t know anything about it and who had never handled a fork before, to build the stacks. My, oh my, you should have seen the shape of the stacks, or should I say mounds.

At last harvest time arrived and most went out to harvest near town or elsewhere. What a welcome relief it was to get a change and get out of the bush, as most of the Settlement was still bush. As you will realize, this was during Prohibition time, and a few of the lads decided that it was very dry, so they set about making some Moonshine or Mountain Dew. Each one contributed to it in order to have some refreshments and to keep up the spirits. Well, winter and snow came in October and the farming season was over. A few got sleighs in order to get around and also to get to town, and the sleigh bells jingled on the long trail, but this trail did not get its name until well on in the wintertime when one man decided to make a brew and take it to Spirit River. He procured a cutter and one morning he started out for town on the long trail, but alas! his cutter was rather low and when

going at a good clip the cutter struck a stump and the horse started out with nothing but the shafts. There our worthy sat, but as luck would have it, two other men started out with a load of oats and came upon our friend with his brew. After a little refreshment they decided to put the cutter on top of the load and two sat on the cutter facing the rear, while one drove the team. As was mentioned earlier, the trail was not so good and sometimes one had to duck in order to miss the low branches of the trees. Nothing pleased our friends more than a huge joke, so the teamster used his whip and ducked, and the branch hit the cutter and our two friends, and landed them away behind the sleigh. Some of the jars were spilled and broken, and away went a lot of the good old Moonshine, so from that time on it was the MOONSHINE TRAIL. After collecting the remainder, our worthies went on and landed at a stopping place. Of course they met lots more there from the west, as the grain was all hauled to Spirit River in those days since the railroad only went to Grande Prairie. Having the refreshments, it was not long before arguments and even fights started. A few bruises were received, and in the morning there was a great stir as a gent was looking for his Peg Leg and could not find it. Old-timers would know who that was.

Many more incidents could be told but suffice it is to say that a good time was had by all. All that are left of that old bunch are seven Canadian soldiers, one American soldier and one of the old civilians who helped to cut the Old Moonshine Trail in 1918.

The Gould Family

by Evelyn McKeeman

Jack Gould (my Dad) was born in England on January 27, 1891. He came to Canada in 1913 and worked for a farmer at Kelwood, Man., then at Strathclair, Man. He met Margaret Morrison in 1914 and they were married in 1916. He enlisted in Winnipeg in March 1916, and served two years overseas in the 1st World War.

He returned to Strathclair in 1919 and farmed until 1929, then decided to go homesteading in the Peace River country, so in the spring of 1930 he came to Alberta and B.C. He worked with a road crew from Hythe to Dawson Creek, then joined a survey party and worked in the Pine River area of B.C.

He went to Blueberry Mtn. for the harvest, and drove a team for Wm. (Shorty) Collins on the threshing outfit. He filed on a half section approximately six miles northwest of the old Blueberry store. (There was no store there at that time.) Then he got green spruce logs out and started to build our two room shack. It had a shanty roof made of poles, tar paper and dirt. We had a problem though, as every

time it rained the roof leaked. However, it was a warm house in the winter, the first winter was quite mild, what was called an "Open Winter". The house wasn't ready to move into when Mum and our family of five arrived from Manitoba, Nov. 25, 1930, so we stayed with the Collins Family for two weeks before moving to our own.

Jim Lomas and Jim Stone were our closest neighbors, half-a-mile away. Our family consisted of Evelyn, Leslie, Jimmie, Leona and Reta. Times were very hard in the early '30's. We started without horses, as we only brought a milk cow and a dog up from Manitoba. The spring of '31 we planted a garden on the N.E. corner of Lomases land, in clay. We had a heavy June rain and the land baked solid, so the garden didn't grow. That fall we traded our cream separator off to Esselinks for potatoes.

The summer of '31, Dad cleared land, and Jim Lomas broke our first small field, so we were able to have a garden and grow feed for the cow. Our soil was good — a chocolate colored loam. The cow had a heifer calf, and with a fresh cow we had plenty of milk, cream and butter.

That spring Dad picked roots for Mason Woods (Woody) for a dollar a day — not cash, but a hen a day or any grocery item they had that we could use, such as eggs, sugar, etc. In June of that year Dad fought fire between Blueberry and Spirit River. While he was gone we were almost burned out by a bush fire ourselves. Fortunately Jim Stone and Dan Galbraith were breaking land on Jim's homestead adjoining ours to the south, and they helped us save our buildings. The weather was very hot and dry, 103°F. in the shade. Water was scarce, and our small dugout completely dried up, so we had to carry water in pails from Jim Stone's Creek for the house. The June rains, when they came were a real blessing. Dad dug a root cellar near the house that summer.

In the spring of '32 our cow had twin calves. That summer Dad took a job to clear land for Wm. (Heavy) Tarr, to get the use of his horses to break our land. We all helped and cleared land on our homestead and broke it. That fall we traded our twin calves off to Jimmie and Sammy Kirkland for a mammoth sized donkey (Maude). She was the size of a mule and was quite useful to us, both for riding and working.

Dad skidded out fire-killed spruce and pine logs, which we sawed into 18 inch blocks with the crosscut saw. These were split into shakes (shingles) for the roof of a new house to be built the following summer, on our east quarter, closer to Cottons. That winter Dad cut the green logs for the new house, and in the spring, got Jesse and Alf Cotton with their team and sleigh to help him haul them out.

We picked the roots on the breaking, and worked

the land with the donkey and a grey mare (Bell), we borrowed from Harry (Scotty) Young, and this breaking was seeded to oats. The seeding was done by hand, called broadcasting. Dad cut and hauled rails and posts, and fenced the fields, as there was no money for wire, spikes or nails. He used green willows to hold the rails up to the posts. Next job was to peel the logs for the house, and we all worked at this till they were done, using axe, drawknife, and butcher knives. We built the house ourselves with the help of Jesse and Alf Cotton. Jesse hewed the logs inside as they were put on.

When the house was built up to the square, the Cottons had to quit as it was time to do their haying and harvesting. Dad put the roof on himself with the help of the family. The partitions were made of peeled poles, and placed vertically. Mum and Dad plastered the cracks between the logs. We had a small cellar underneath the house, and Dad also dug a new root cellar. We moved into the house in November.

We kids didn't get to school as it was too far to walk, so we took Correspondence. We also took our Sunday School by mail from Fairview, Alberta. Wages were pretty low that fall. Dad stooked for Harry Hanrahan for 15¢ an acre, and Mum stooked for Jim Lomas for 10¢ an acre.

The spring of '34 saw an addition to our family, my sister Velma was born on April 4th in Spirit River Hospital. On the fifth or sixth day, the doctor advised Mum to go home while she could, as it was spring break-up and the roads were beginning to get bad. So with a cardboard box (cornflake carton) serving as a bassinette for baby they left for home by team and wagon, approximately 30 miles. Fortunately they arrived in good condition.

In these days the biggest event of the year was the Annual Picnic and Dance, which we always managed to attend. It was nice to visit with our neighbors. In summer Lucy Cotton and I used to walk out to the settlement occasionally to visit a lot of our friends. In spring we usually rode horseback.

Mr. Milldrum was Postmaster at Blueberry, and Herbie Keebler hauled the mail from Spirit River. Herbie brought the west mail to his brother "Dewey's" house, and we picked it up there. We often walked out for it, otherwise the Cotton boys picked it up for us. They rode horseback. In 1935 my brothers and I used to walk out to the Picnic grounds, where we played ball regularly on Sundays, weather permitting. One Sunday evening we got caught in a thunderstorm on our way home and got soaked through.

Another yearly event was the Christmas Concert, followed by a dance. On account of the winter weather we were seldom able to attend, but I do remember attending the Christmas of 1935. All the

years we lived there our family and the Cotton family spent Christmas Day and New Year's Day together.

About '34 Dad and the Cottons put a crossing on the creek between our place and theirs. They also built a good dam where the creek was smaller near our house. From then on we had an adequate supply of water.

One of these years we got the use of Cottons' 4 black Angus steers, Prince, Dick, Dan and Jim by name, to work our farmland for seeding. Joe, George and Ray Cotton had broken them in as calves. After that our own calves were grown and able to do the work. Leslie and Jimmie broke them in as calves also, so we managed without horses. The winter of '35-'36 the donkey died.

We sawed all our own firewood with the crosscut saw. One morning during the summer of '33 Dad, Jimmie and I walked over to work on the new house, when we noticed a herd of range cattle in our lovely crop of oats. There was a heavy dew on the grain, so we got pretty well soaked through getting them out. Then to fix fence till noon wasn't too pleasant — just one of those things. In about the fall of '33 Dad drove a team for Woody and threshed on Jack Taylor's outfit. Chet Reeves also drove a team on the outfit that fall. Tom Lindsay was the separator man.

After the first year on the homestead, we always grew very good gardens, and picked a lot of wild berries on the creek banks, especially strawberries. Dad and Alf Cotton did a lot of hunting together, so they built a hunter's cabin (dugout) in a creek bank a few miles west of our place, and packed out materials for a door, a makeshift stove, etc., on Cotton's saddle horses (Bess and Kate).

We raised a few pigs and chickens for our own use and there was plenty of wild game in the bush. Dad was a good hunter and Mum was a good cook so we never went hungry. Many a delicious meat pie she made from rabbit meat. Dad bought our first pair of weaner pigs from Tom Lindsay in 1931. Tom and Martha lived at Whitburn at that time. They later moved to Blueberry Mtn. to Tom Gillespie's farm.

The spring of '34 we traded our 60-egg incubator off to Warren Howard for two geese and a gander. The fall of '36 Dad was working on a threshing outfit and my brother Jimmie at the age of 13 years, was fall ploughing for Jim Lomas on the Jewitt and Peaver homesteads, driving a 4 horse outfit. My brother Leslie and I were ploughing our fields with the cow and steer and the walking plough — slow but sure. We managed to finish before freeze-up.

I used to enjoy the dances at the old Veterans' Hall, (a log building on the road allowance.) Tom and Martha Lindsay supplied the music. About 1933 the Jamison brothers joined their band, and we had

very enjoyable dance music. We had hard times then, but we had some happy times, too. We were musically inclined, so made our own entertainment. I played the autoharp. We had the use of Alf Cotton's violin for years and I learned to play it by ear. I've really enjoyed playing the violin through the years and still do. My brothers also learned to play the violin and guitar by ear, and my sisters all play the guitar. I can remember Reg Ellwood and Charlie Cousins coming to our place and playing music and singing. Reg played the violin and Charlie played the mandolin. Charlie was also a good tenor singer.

We left Blueberry Mtn. in March 1937 and moved to the Buffalo Lakes, Sexsmith area. Mum passed away July 17, 1957, and Dad on April 6, 1977.

Bill Graham and Wife, Marjorie

I came to the Peace Country in April of 1937, from Whitewood, Saskatchewan, travelling in a box-car with Angus Macdonald's horses and some machinery. He was resettling on a farm south of Spirit River owned by Jim Dodge who was a partner at that time in a Spirit River Hardware store.

After arriving in Spirit, I made a trip by team and democrat to Blueberry Mountain, approximately a 30 mile trip. The driver was the mailman, John Wakinuk, and we arrived in Blueberry around 6 p.m. I then went by team to Walter Mitchell's farm then on to Rod Macdonald's farm where I worked for about a couple of years.

In those years, horses were the means of transportation in the Blueberry area. Our main work was clearing land, cutting brush by axe, and pulling stumps of trees by horsepower and manpower for weeks at a time, then breaking the land with eight horses driven tandem 4 x 4.

In 1939 we had a fairly dry summer, and a large forest fire broke out in what is now known as Fourth Creek and Silver Valley areas. This happened in late summer and many acres of good forest land were burned. In those days this was wilderness area, and access was by foot and pack horses. Many of us from the settlement had to go and fight the fire. Our tools were a round mouthed shovel and a canvas water bag on our backs, with an attached hand pump.

Our work in the wintertime on the farm was mostly hauling firewood or logs to saw up for lumber, or hauling grain by team to town. The team had to be shod all around, and to save approximately ten miles to the elevators at Spirit River, we travelled a trail called the "Short Cut". This took us down and up two steep creeks, the Ksituan and the Rat Creek. When going downhill we had to wrap the runner of the sleigh with a logging chain to help keep the weight of the load (approximately 100 bushels of

wheat) from pushing the team off their feet. This was called rough locking the sleigh. For going up the other side we had a 'dog' on the back sleigh runner. This was a sharp bent iron that would dig in when the horses had to rest going up hill, and it would keep the load from pulling the horses backwards while they stopped to rest.

We would load the grain on the farm by scoop shovel the night before, and early the next morning start for town. We always tried to haul with a neighbor, which would give us two teams to take the loads up the steep hills on the creeks. We would go as far as Bill Rankin's stopping place that first day — this was about seven miles from Spirit River. The horses were housed in his barn for the night, and the men slept in the bunkhouse. Everyone packed his own bed roll, and next day left for town early in the morning, then arrived home in Blueberry around 9:00 p.m.

I worked for Hugo Young of Broncho Creek the spring of 1940, then went to Winnipeg in the back of a neighbor's truck, as far as Lloydminster, then by bus. I joined the Army in Winnipeg on July 9, 1940, and after five years overseas, two years in Edmonton and Trail, B.C., came back to Blueberry in the spring of 1948. That summer I helped my Dad, and bought our first ¼ section of land through the V.L.A. from Dad.

At Christmas, Marjorie Foster and I were married in Edmonton and came back to the farm in January, to eventually move into our own shack, 16' x 26', with two rooms.

Marjorie Graham

My first sight of the Peace River Country was through the N.A.R. train windows on June 30, 1948. I was met in Spirit River by Marion, Graeme and Bill, and was escorted in Graeme's 1925 "STAR" to Whitburn where we had a "1st Anniversary" dinner with them. After viewing a forest fire to the west, with Graeme and his dad, my journey was taken up again, this time by team and buggy to the Graham Srs. at Blueberry Mountain, stopping first at Jim and Anne's. We met Mrs. Bernard on the road and gave her a lift.

After our marriage on December 25, 1948, my next trip came in early January of 1949 at 40° below zero, when we took up residence on our V.L.A. farm, first in the log house with Mr. and Mrs. Graham for a few weeks until our small place that Bill was building was habitable. Mr. Dan Galbraith brought our things by truck from Spirit River to Jim's, and horse and sleigh did the trick from there to home.

June, Allen, David, Susan and Iris were added to our circle in the following years, and we expanded the farm to include the Philipchuk quarter, the Reeve's quarter and the Tom Mollinga quarter. In

1974 we sold out to Alex and Gordon Skoworodko and moved to Grande Prairie.

June is Mrs. Ronald Routledge and lives at Nelson, B.C. She and Ron have one boy, Bradley.

Allen lives in Red Deer with his wife Shannon and their family, Chris, and Wendy.

Susan is Mrs. Alan Rehaume and lives in Calgary, while Iris works for the Toronto Dominion Bank in Grande Prairie.

After graduating with a degree in Forestry at U. of A., David chose New Brunswick to buy his tree farm and work for J.D. Irving Nurseries. He was in a fatal accident February 1st, 1979 on his way to work.

Miss Ferrier's music lessons cannot be forgotten, nor the 4-H Clubs, Home and School Association, and the Farm Women's group.

When Allen was born in Sexsmith in May, 1953, he and I took the train to the Spirit River toward the end of a deluge. The grade was being made from Rycroft to Spirit River at that time in readiness for the hardtop. Because of the heavy 3 to 4 day rain, I noticed many vehicles abandoned on and off the grade as the train progressed to Spirit River. After staying overnight in the Hotel at Spirit, the trip home was completed by team and buggy, with no worries about our clinging Peace River mud.

Recollections of our move to the Peace River Country in 1937

by Dave Graham

That year my parents decided to leave our farm 8 miles south of Whitewood, Saskatchewan, and start again in the north, at Blueberry Mountain. Our crop in Saskatchewan withered and died when the drought hit the prairies in early summer; even the trees and willows died.

My brother Jim who had gone north a year or two earlier, came down to help in the move. We packed up all our household belongings, farm equipment and feed for the animals for the trip and headed for Whitewood where a rail boxcar for the trip was spotted at the siding near the station. We loaded everything into the car and blocked everything to keep it from moving when the train was shunting. Jim and I went with the animals to care for them on the trip.

The highlight of the trip came when we entered the irrigation area of southern Alberta. What a difference sufficient moisture made to farming; everything was lush and green. We could see the fires of Leduc oil fields for 40 miles. At that time gas was burned off to get rid of it so the oil could be pumped from the wells, and it made a spectacular sight at night.

In Edmonton the car was shunted to the Northern

Alberta Railway Yards and the trip continued. As the train snaked it's way across the Smoky River Valley we could get out and walk alongside, as the train moved so slowly.

Upon reaching Spirit River the boxcar was unloaded onto wagons, our own and our new neighbors. The horses and cattle were stabled in the livery barns in Spirit for the night. There were two large livery stables at that time — one west of the station and one east.

Next morning the trek began. The road was just a graded dirt road and wound down into each creek, over a bridge and up the other bank. Driving the road now it is hard to imagine the effort the horses put into that trip, holding back on the down grades, and pulling the heavy loads up the steep grades, as we crossed each creek. We reached Rod MacDonald's farm late at night, minus our dog which we lost along the way. Next morning when we got up, there he was on the front step. We were glad to see him and pleased that he had found his way to the right farm.

Next day we took some of our belongings and started east to our own farm. Most of the road allowances were surveyed, but no roads had been built. We got permission from Frank Tyler to go through his farm. This temporary road was used as long as I lived in Blueberry, which was until I left in July 1940.

The first winter in Blueberry, we lived in a 14' x 14' square building, complete with cookstove, table, chairs, and beds. A log barn was built for the animals. A log house followed the next year. At that time the only people who lived north of Bear Creek were the Esselink family. The complete area north of Bear Creek to the Peace River and west to the B.C. boundary was range. Folks took their young stock and any horses they didn't need, over there in the spring and turned them loose. In the fall we'd go back and round them up again and bring them home.

East of our farm was being settled by Ukrainian settlers. To get to Spirit River for supplies these folks had to go west to Blueberry store and then to Spirit over very poor dirt roads. There was no shortcut across Ksituan Creek at that time.

In the winter we freighted grain during weather as cold as -45° F. We drove to the granaries, covered the horses with blankets, and shovelled 100 bushels into the sleigh box with a scoop shovel. The runners froze to the snow and it was hard for the horses to start the load of 6000 lbs. plus the weight of the box. We would walk behind to keep warm. The sleigh runners squealed on the snow as we moved along, it was so cold and dry. The lucky folks, or should I say the better established farmers, had cabs built on their rigs, heated by wood stoves, which made the trip more pleasant for the driver but harder for the horses.

The horses would end the day with icicles two feet long hanging from their noses.

At that time there were two stopping places along the way: one at Cache Creek, and one at 8 miles west of Spirit River called Rankins. These places provided stables for the horses and bunkhouses for the drivers. They were situated on the creeks so that water was available for the animals and also for the use of the drivers. All meals were cooked by the individuals themselves on the old wood burning stoves.

We always stayed at Rankins, because it was close enough to town to enable us to be in Spirit River by the time the grain elevator attendant opened up in the morning. Before I left in 1940, trucks were taking over the freighting of the grain so very little was transported by horse and sleigh. Many of the farmers had tractors and cars, so I saw quite a change during my short stay up there.

I have been back several times since, and even I find it hard to visualize the above conditions. As you drive over modern roads, see the farmers working with modern equipment, and see Spirit River with it's hospital and new school, etc., a person realizes the great changes that have taken place in the last 40 years.

Moonshine Lake was in its wild state. In the winter of 1939-40 Pete Sandul and I cut ice there. Everyone put ice in sawdust in their ice houses for use as drinking water in the summer. We got the contract to fill the ice house at the Nurse's house at Blueberry that winter. It is still a standing joke how Dave Graham fell in Moonshine Lake while cutting ice. Did you ever get wet when the temperature was -35° below?. Luckily our rig had a cab and heater so I was fairly dry by the time we had to unload the ice blocks at the Nurse's home.

I hope my recollections give people some insight into how life went on in the northern section of Alberta before World War II.

Graham, James W.

James Weir Graham was born in Scotland in 1881, one of a family of nine. He had a twin sister, Jessie, who later married Tom Brown and lived in Trail, B.C. The other three sisters were Mary, Agnes (Nan) and Maggie. Brothers were Bill, Matthew, David, and John, and all lived in Trail, B.C. at one time.

At Uddingstone, Scotland in 1907 Jimmie married Marion Ford who was also born in Scotland, and one of a family of eight — three sisters, and four brothers. The families of both the Grahams and the Fords came to Canada in the early 1900's. The Grahams settled in Trail, B.C., and the Fords near Portage la Prairie in Manitoba.

Jimmie and Marion had a family of four boys and



First Canadian Home, Whitewood, Sask.

one girl born in Scotland, and he continued to farm there till 1927 when he brought his family to Canada under the Land Settlement Scheme. They settled at Whitewood, Saskatchewan, and suffered ten years of drought there.

In 1937 they moved to Blueberry Mountain and lived in a log house built by his son Jim on N.E. ¼ of 17-80-7-W.6, that was sold to them by Shorty Collins. He farmed with horses and travelled by horse and buggy, so never got very far from Blueberry Mtn.

On January 12, 1950, in one of the coldest spells on record, his son Bill was going to Walter Mitchells by team and sleigh. He decided to go along and stop off at Roy White's. He left Bill at Roy's lane and



At new log House with first grandchild.

walked to the house, went into the kitchen, reached for his handkerchief, and dropped dead; a dreadful shock to all concerned. Temperatures stayed below zero for two weeks steady, and it was -60° F the day of his funeral, January 16th. Marjorie Mitchell was the District Nurse at Blueberry Mtn. at that time, and prepared the body for burial. Marion moved to Whitburn and had a small house on the Thomlinson farm. She died in October 1952 in hospital in Edmonton. Both are buried in Blueberry Mtn. Cemetery.

Of the family of five, Jim came to Blueberry Mountain in 1934 with Rod MacDonald, married Anne Skinner of Whitewood in 1938, and raised a family of five girls and two boys in Blueberry Mountain. Jim died in January 1973, and is buried in Blueberry Mtn. Cemetery.

Alex worked at Cominco in Trail, B.C., and never lived in Blueberry Mtn. He married Ethel Skinner of Whitewood (Anne's sister) in 1940 and raised a family of one boy and four girls in Trail, B.C. He and Ethel retired in 1976 and moved from Trail to White Rock, B.C., in 1977 where they now live.

Bill came to Spirit River with the Angus MacDonald family in 1937. In 1940 he and brother Dave joined the Armed Forces and went overseas. After his discharge in 1945, he worked as a carpenter in Edmonton. In 1948 he married Marjorie Foster of Edmonton and they moved to the farm in Blueberry Mtn. They raised a family of three girls and two boys there. They sold the farm in 1974 and retired to Grande Prairie where they still live.

Dave settled in Vancouver when he was discharged from the Forces. He married Daisy Burn of Winnipeg in 1943 and raised two sons, Bob and Doug. They all live in Vancouver.

Marion was working in Winnipeg when the family moved to Blueberry Mtn. She later transferred to Edmonton with the C.N.R., and worked in the Purchasing Department there. In 1947 she married Graeme Thomlinson of Whitburn and moved to the farm where they have lived ever since.



Senior Grahams in buggy.

The Jim Graham Family History by Granddaughter Karen Graham

In August 1908, James Weir Graham (Jim) was born in Scotland, the oldest in the family of four boys and one girl. He attended school in Scotland and was also an enthusiastic participant in sports, especially soccer, for which he received medals. In 1927 Jim decided to move to Canada. At the age of 19, sponsored by the Ford's (his mother's brothers and sister), he left Scotland, never to return. His father decided that the rest of the family should also immigrate to Canada, but as the decision was made too late to leave with Jim, the rest of the family followed on a later ship. Jim first went to Rossendale, Manitoba, but only months later followed his family to Whitewood, Saskatchewan.

In Whitewood, he met two people who were to play a very important role in his life: Anne Louise Skinner who was to become his wife, and Rod McDonald who became a life long friend. Anne was born in Manitoba, the oldest of four girls and one boy. She and her family had moved to Whitewood one year previous to the Graham clan.

Jim worked for Rod McDonald for sometime. Rod had been in Blueberry Mountain in 1918, and in 1934 decided to return, bringing Jim with him. Upon returning to Saskatchewan with the intention of remaining there, Jim found that the drought and depression had taken a firm hold. He then persuaded his parents that the family should move to the Peace Country. This move was made in 1937. Jim built a log cabin, then returned to Saskatchewan to marry Anne in June of 1938 and bring her to their new home.

In the spring of 1939 Jim and Anne moved to a house on the hill which they had rented from Jimmy Dodge. This was later purchased by Bob and Arletta Hampton. While living on the hill, Jim and Anne had five children; Winnifred, Betty, Rod, and Alex. In September of 1946 Norma was born, and in Novem-

ber of that same year they moved into the house they had built on their own land (SW-16-80-7-W.6) This house has served the family well over the years. Two more daughters were born, Janet in 1948, and Peggy (the baby) in 1950. On the whole, the family was very lucky, in that for most of the time they enjoyed good health, suffering no more than the normal run of childhood ailments. The one noteworthy exception to this was Janet, who at 14 months swallowed lye which burned her esophagus. For a very long time all her food had to be put through a sieve since she couldn't swallow anything larger than a kernel of wheat. Since normal growth and elasticity was disrupted, swallowing food of any size remains a problem even today.

After the Second World War Jim's parents retired and his brother Bill returned from the army to take over the farm. J. W. Graham Senior passed away early in 1950, and his wife Marion followed in the fall of 1952.

For a number of years, a group of neighbors, including Jim, owned a sawmill that was used for cutting lumber. As young boys Rod and Alex considered it a big treat to be able to spend the winter holidays and Saturdays in the bush with dad skidding out logs with horses. The farm work was also done with horses until Jim got his first tractor early in the 1950's. The harvest was threshed until Jim and Rod McDonald purchased an I.H.C. 91 combine in 1961. Jim purchased his first vehicle, a Ford truck around 1957. During the time that money was short, the family income was supplemented by shipping cream and selling eggs. Jim graded their own eggs.

All the Graham children went to school in Blueberry Creek, only one mile east of home. Alex remembers one day when it was particularly cold and Jim (his dad) took pity on them and consented to drive them to school with the horses and sleigh. They picked up the Zeyha children from across the road and set off. They all had great fun running and playing in the sleigh box on the way to school. Upon arrival Jim informed them that if they could run like that, they could consider that their last ride to school.

For a number of years Betty and Wynn were janitors at the school, and this included lighting the fires each day. Since there was always a shortage of kindling at the school, one day Betty, with Alex's help chopped a gunny sack full and dragged it the mile to school. They lit the fire in one room and went to get the fire going in another, returning just in time to see Johnny Patrick dump the whole sack of kindling in the fire.

There were a few bad years in the early 60's due to a combination of unfortunate events. With the opening of more land to the South and West; the



Log Cabin under Construction.

rerouting of the natural water flow, and more rain than usual, their yard was completely flooded at times. At one time Jim's 300 laying hens were forced out of the chicken house by water, and had to roost in the trees. Many times the family was forced to do the chores by riding horses to get around the barnyard.

In the early 60's Jim was working on the combine when he got a small piece of steel in his eye, causing him to lose the sight in that eye. In 1969 when he was hit in the face with a cow's tail, that eye was pitted and had to be removed and replaced with a glass eye.

In 1963 Jim purchased Rod McDonald's farm, when Uncle Mac, as he had come to be known by all the Graham offspring, retired. For a few years Uncle Mac remained living alone in his house, as he had since his wife, Auntie Mae, had passed away in September of 1954. Then between trips back to Saskatchewan and various other places, Uncle Mac found a home at the Graham's until his passing in July of 1973.

The Graham family always were and are, active members of the community. Jim served on the Co-op. Board, the Spirit River Hospital Board, as well as helping with 4-H and other community works. Anne was also very active over the years, holding every position on the executive of the Blueberry Mountain Goodwill Society, and also helping with 4-H, and teaching Sunday School.

Probably one of the most important parts of Jim and Anne's life together, was their unending faith and devotion to God and his church. They were both extremely active and dedicated in their service to Munro Presbyterian Church here in Blueberry Mountain. Jim was Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Managers from 1938 until his death in 1973. He also served as an Elder and Clerk of Session, and Anne served as both President and Secretary-Treasurer of the W.M.S. Group: held two 4 year terms as President of Presbyterian, taught Sunday School, and represented the W.M.S. at meetings of Synodical. Both Jim and Anne have represented the local church at meetings all over Canada at one time or another.

For many years it became almost a regular weekly event, that after church, friends and family would gather at Graham's for much fun, fellowship, food and a lot of music. The music was supplied by Jim on his violin, Graeme Thomlinson, Ted Smyth, Don McArthur, and in later years Norma, then Brian and Neil Thomlinson on the piano — a good time was had by all.

Jim and Anne had many happy years on the farm until Jim passed away in January of 1973. Anne remained on the farm for a few years before purchasing her house in town where she lives at the present time (1980). She works in the Spirit River Hospital.

Rod remained on the farm except for the two years that he attended Fairview Agricultural College. He led 4-H for 8 years and has served the community in various positions over the years. In 1977 he married Dorothy Stoby and they live in Blueberry Mountain with her two children, Darrel 15, and Sheri 10.

Alex left the farm in 1965 to attend Alberta College, where he took a Business Administration course. Following graduation he was a computer programmer and salesman for N.C.R. Canada for nine years. In 1966 he married Heather DeBolt, and they have two daughters, Karen 11, and Jodie 8. In 1975 they returned to the farm and formed a partnership with Rod. As well as the farm, Rod, Alex and their families own and operate Graham's Farm Service Ltd. (U.F.A.) in Spirit River, and Birds Eye View Store in Blueberry Mountain.

Peggy became a C.N.A., and after working in Edmonton for a few years she moved to Grande Cache where she met and married Ken Charlton. They and their two children, Adrienne 3, and Warren 1, moved back to the original farm home in 1980 when they joined the Graham Bros. partnership.

Wynn became an R.N. at the Royal Alex. Hospital in Edmonton. She married Wally Weist who works for Calgary Power. After many transfers they now live in Whitecourt with their three children; Janice 14, Kelly 11, and Nevin 9.

Betty took a Business course at St. Joe's in Grande Prairie. She married Stan McArthur and they have two children; Donna 14, and Dwayne 12. At present they live in Grande Prairie where Stan works for International Harvester, and Betty is a member of the Public School Board. They also farm a half



Music at the Grahams.



J. Graham Family Picture.

section of land in Blueberry Mountain, so much of their time in the summer is spent on the farm.

Norma is a Medical Records Librarian and lives with her husband Ken Ferguson in Lac La Biche where Ken also works for Calgary Power. They have three sons; Brent 12, Dean 11, and Scott 7.

The remaining daughter Janet, worked for a short time in Edmonton before she married Dale Winsnes and moved to the farm at Ryley where they operate a sizeable dairy farm. They have four children; Kevin 10, Stuart 9, Trudy 6, and William 3.

This brings the James Weir Graham history up to date, and although some are not living here now, they are part of Blueberry Mountain history, and Blueberry Mountain is a large portion of theirs.

The Grenache Family by Bertha Burake and Kay McKay (daughters)

Aylward Joachim Grenache was born Aug. 1, 1889 in Lucknow, Ont., the son of a shoemaker. He was educated there and in Buffalo, N.Y. In 1905 he came west to work in the coal mines in Michel and Taber, and broke farm land in the Gleichen area. He settled in Neville, Sask., where he was town secretary and pool hall owner. Here he married Frances Germaine and had one daughter, Eileen. Ayl joined up in the 128th Batt. in World War I and went overseas. Ayl and Frances were divorced and Eileen was taken to the U.S.A. where she was adopted and raised in Boulder, Colo. by her grandfather, Wallace Grenache.

Mary Meadowcroft was born in Manchester, Eng. Aug. 29, 1896. She attended college in Manchester and became a teacher with distinction in music. She taught school and entertained the troops in hospitals with her singing. Here she met a wounded soldier, Ayl Grenache. Following his discharge in 1919, Ayl Grenache worked on the survey of the Blueberry Mtn. district. He filed on N.W. 9-80-8 W6.



H. Tarr, M. Caterer, B. Burake, A. Grenache and Bill Burake — Aug. 1963.

April 12, 1920 Ayl and Mary were married in Moose Jaw, Sask. and lived with Hiram Walker in Blueberry Mtn. until their first log house with a sod roof, was built. Their first child, Bertha, was born Feb. 19, 1921 at the Art McArthur home one mile west of Spirit River. Marie was born at the same home on Nov. 8, 1922. Mom had frost on her hair while in bed there as it was so cold. John Hiram was born in the Grande Prairie hospital, July 31, 1926. The family had outgrown the little log house and a new log house, with a shingled roof was built in 1927. Here on a stormy night, March 26, 1928, Kathleen Yvonne was born with only her father as attendant.

Daddy was a fire ranger until 1928 covering the area from Cadotte Lake to the B.C. boundary and up into the bend of the Peace River. He also took the census for many years.

Bertha and Marie attended school in Blueberry Hall when school started in April 1929, with Miss Jean Walker (later Mrs. Vic Mitchell) as teacher. Teachers Yoder, Comer, Chambers, Jones, and Wilson taught in the hall before the school was built. Marie died in April, 1937 in a red measles epidemic. She is buried in the Blueberry cemetery.

In February, 1942, Daddy joined the Veteran's Guard and was stationed at Ozada, Alberta, Angler, Ont., Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. In the fall of 1942, Kathleen went to school in Spirit River and Mary went teaching in Winagami and in subsequent years in country schools near Medicine Hat. John died in Edmonton in July 1946.

Following his discharge in 1947, the farm was sold to John Doetzel and Ayl was partsman for the coal company at Bow City where Mary taught school 1947-48. They spent that summer visiting all their

former friends in Blueberry and on Aug. 31, 1948, Mom died of a heart attack.

Daddy moved to Suffield where he was partsman at the Experimental Station. He worked as time-keeper for the Dept. of Highways in various places and retired to Calgary in 1963. He moved to a nursing home in Brooks in 1971 and died in April 1973. Both our parents are buried in Medicine Hat.

Bertha attended school in Blueberry until the age of 15 when she went to Spirit River and worked for the Fitton and Moravec families while going to school. She then worked on the Ray Grimm farm where she met and married Bill Burake in 1941. They moved to their farm in Bridgeview. One son, David William was born Jan. 12, 1942. They moved to the Burnt River area where they worked and bought a farm east of Highway #2 by the Burnt River Campsite. Bill worked in the forest in the winters. They sold the farm and retired six miles south of Rycroft. David married Helen Hollingshead in 1971. They have three children Elgin William, Jan. 20, 1974; Kelsey Wendell, Jan. 14, 1975; Tanis Lynn Oct. 21, 1978. David is a mechanic presently employed at Central Peace Auction.

Kathleen completed High School in Medicine Hat, then attended U. of A. (Calgary branch) in 1947. She taught one year at New World School in the Spirit River S.D., and married Ross McKay in 1949. They ranched in Bow City until 1968 when they sold, retaining a small farm. Then they travelled extensively. They have a family of five children. William Ross, Aug/50 married Pamela Herdman in England and is presently a surveyor in Calgary. Allen

John, June/52 is an apprentice farmer in Tilley. Jo-Anne Mareal, March/54 married Ron Mitchell and they farm at Sturgis, Sask. Donald James June/55 married Connie Kozma of Brooks. They had one son, Robert James, Nov. 7, 1972, who was killed in a truck collision March 18, 1975. They have a daughter, Jamie Lynn, Feb. 15, 1976. Betty Jean, Jan./61 presently resides in Duchess.

Kathleen returned to teaching in 1969. They sold their farm in the spring and Ross died of cancer, April 17, 1980. Kay continues to teach grade two at Rainier.

Robert and Patricia Hagerman

We were married in Vancouver, B.C., on April 7th, 1945. After Bob got his discharge from the navy, we moved to Calgary where he worked at various jobs until we purchased our first farm at Carbon, Alberta, in the spring of 1952. By this time we had the three eldest children, John, Bruce, and David. The farm was very old and run down, and we had no water, power, or telephone, and we knew what it was like to wake up in the morning with ice in the kettle. By the end of one year we had rigged up a pipe to bring in water from the well into the kitchen, and had the power and the telephone in. In the fall of 1955, our daughter Kathy was born.

In 1957 we sold our farm and moved to Lethbridge, Alberta, where Bob's dad, J. F. Hagerman, had purchased a large dairy farm, east of the city. After five years of living there, we started looking for the future. With three sons to raise, we needed more land to farm, and with the ever increasing high prices in southern Alberta, our thoughts turned to the Peace Country, which brought us to Blueberry Mountain.

We arrived April 2, 1962. We had come up earlier



Helen, David, Bertha Burake with K. McKay.



Hagerman family on first farm.

and had purchased the Bill McCullough farm (S. ½-35-80-8). We also purchased the S. ½-36-80-8 from Len Morrison. Bill McCullough had been killed in a tractor accident the year before. As Bill's house was small and too far off the road, we decided we needed a better building site closer to the road. We therefore built a two car garage that we could use later, bought two granaries, one of which was used for the boys to sleep in, and with Dad Hagerman's small house trailer, we had our new spot and proceeded to build a large aluminum building which was used as a permanent living area and large shop for the three "Cats" that we had. Needless to say our kitchen rattled and smelled of Diesel on many occasions.

By this time we had filed on our homestead across the Bear Creek, which had at one time been the former homestead of George Esselink's folks. We made the first road thru' to our homestead with the Cat. In 1966, the government completed the road, and in 1976 it was gravelled for our grandson Brian to go to school.

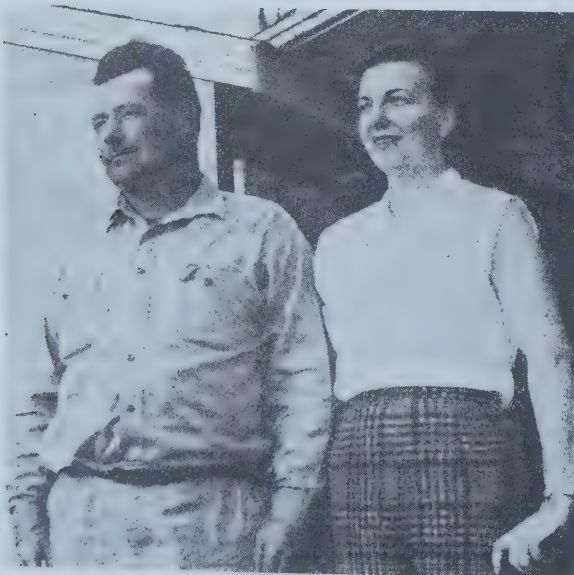
John worked with his dad, while Bruce, David and Kathy attended the Blueberry Creek School, and later Spirit River High School. Each spring and fall, Bob's dad came from Calgary to help with the farm

work. He was very active, and drove tractors until his death in 1967 at the age of 84, in the Spirit River General Hospital. A homesteader in his own right, he came to Alberta in 1906.

I remember one day in July, 1964, when our neighbor's daughter, Arlene Jackson, and Kathy went for a bike ride. Both girls were nine years old. They came racing home, screaming that a furious wolf was chasing them. A few minutes later, in trotted a motherless coyote pup, about three months old. It was surprisingly friendly but very hungry, so we fed it milk, egg and bread. It made its den under Dad Hagerman's trailer. He was quite fun to have around for a while, but got quite snarly when anyone came near his den and would jump out at us. Wild instincts are bred deep. The Ranger suggested putting him to sleep as he would not be able to survive on his own. That same fall, I went to the garden and found a great many carrots dug up, partly eaten, and tracks all around, the result of hungry coyotes.

Bruce always had a good business head, and at the age of 14, with the help of brother David, set up a Kool-Aid stand on the road, which was at that time the main road to Fourth Creek. (Also with lots of thanks to Mom who supplied the many ice cubes). He

New - Era "Sodbusters" Carve Homestead Holdings At Blueberry



Bob and Pat Hagerman.



Breaking Hagerman Land.



Family. Summer 1978.

also purchased boxes of chocolate bars from Jack Bird's store at wholesale price for resale.

In the fall and winter of 1963, Bob, with the help of Roy Collins and George Esselink, spent many hours in making arrangements for mail delivery north of Jack Bird's store. Our first mail delivery came on May 12, 1964. Also in 1963 he was active in getting the phone hooked up to Central in Spirit River and we were able to make our first long distance phone call to Dad Hagerman in Calgary on February 6, 1964.

We remember sometime in the summer of 1964, we had Bernie Archer over to do some welding for us. We had trouble with the power, and it never seemed to have a strong enough current, and the breaker kept going off. After numerous trips to the pole to turn it back on, Bernie asked David to check the line and see where it was leaking. After about ten minutes, a bewildered David returned with the question, "What does it look like?" As he was only eleven at the time and was so serious, we all had a good laugh, and it remains today as one of our favorite memories.

In the winter of 1966, Jack Bird phoned Bob to say that he knew of some buildings that were for sale that would do for a curling rink. Not knowing whether the Community was interested, and not having time to organize a meeting, they decided to go ahead and purchase them. They proceeded to organize a meeting, which was in session when the buildings arrived, and a hasty decision was made as to where to put them. Jack Bird donated the land and they were placed on the west side of the store, where they now stand. Another meeting was held at a later date, and at this time the note for the loan was signed by Jim Paish, George Esselink, Jack Bird, and Bob for the Blueberry Mountain Curling Club.

In 1967 we sold the farm to Harold Fitzsimmons and bought the Bielecki farm, 1½ miles east of Jack Bird's Store. In 1971 we sold this farm to Dick Esselink and rented the homestead land to Harold Fitzsimmons. We then moved to Grande Prairie and opened the Sharp Shop. After one year we sold this to David and moved to Hinton where Bob worked as Head Saw Filer in the saw mill.

After being away for four years, we returned on March 21, 1975 to our homestead and remained until October, 1980, when we sold the farm to Doug Yanishewski, and made our home in Rycroft.

Bob and Arletta Hampton

We came to this country in the spring of 1946 from Saskatchewan; Bob from Govan, and I, Arletta, from Star City, where we had just been married. Bob bought a '27 Chrysler, packed our belongings in the back seat and headed for a honeymoon in the Peace River country that we had heard so much about; and we have resided here ever since, on a farm we bought from the V.L.A. At that time Jim and Anne Graham were renting it from Jimmie Dodge, who sold the land to V.L.A. Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Thomas had previously rented it, and Roy White had also farmed it at one time. The original owner was George Houston, who got the farm from the Soldier Settlement Board after the 1st World War.

At the time we came here, there was just a dusty trail from the old store, and the road on to Spirit River wasn't much better, especially when it rained. When we went to town there was usually a load of neighbors as there were not too many vehicles in the district.



Bob and Lynn.

Friday was usually the day we went to town, as the V.L.A. man would be there to solve any problems. If I didn't go, I would start looking out the window when I thought it was time for the men to be getting home. One day Mrs. Campbell told me I was wasting my time doing that. She said, "they will be here when they get ready," which meant when the bar closed. She told me her husband Jack went to town one time and it was a week before he got back: I think it was the time he went to Edmonton without telling her. Our neighbors were much more plentiful in those days. Emma and John Doetzel lived right across the road south, Marianne and Jack Richards were west of them, Joe Christenson north and west of Richards, Mrs. Minnie Albu, Scotty Young, Charlie Cousins, Harry Hanrahan, all north and west, also the Kirlands, and all within a mile of our place.

The next year, 1947, our first child Lynn was born. By this time our car had quit and our mode of travel was by tractor — a Massey Harris, bought new in '46 at about \$900. Bob took the seat off and put on a wooden seat where we could stash the groceries underneath. This we used for a year (in the summer), and sleighs in the winter. We had also acquired a team of horses in the fall of '49; a nice pair of white ones bought in Heart Valley. They were known as run-aways, so we had lots of fast trips to the store and visiting the neighbors.

Beth was born in the fall of '49, and by this time we had a truck. All the children were born in Spirit River, delivered by Dr. Law or associates. That fall the store burned, and business was carried on in the Hall till the new store was built, which was shortly after the new year. By '53 Doug was born and we had bought a grain truck from A. O. Smith. It was the roughest thing to ride in, and I was scared to drive it. When I told this to Bob he said, "get in and drive naturally, you have been driving the car like a three ton truck for years." Dawn was born in '55 and by then we had a car, then came Robert in '58, Beverly in '60, and Gar in '62.

All this time Lynn was having bronchial attacks, and until Wilma Gunn (Bird), our district nurse came into the district, we didn't know what her problem was. In the fall of '52 Bob came down with pneumonia and Wilma was coming to the house every day to administer treatment. After checking Lynn over, she was sure it was asthma, so that fall on a trip to Ontario, a specialist was consulted and confirmed Wilma's diagnosis. Every treatment in the book was tried, but as she grew older the attacks became worse until one finally took her. She passed away in September of '78.

In the meantime we lost Gar in a fatal accident Xmas Eve of '76. The rest of the family are now



Bob and Doug Hampton, with Scotty Young.

grown and on their own. Beth is married to Henry Earl and farming on the Christenson land. Doug is married to Alice Carpenter and is with the Armed Forces, which he joined shortly after high school. They have been posted in Bermuda and Inuvik. Dawn is married to Dan Fitzpatrick. They have a daughter and farm in the Fourth Creek district. Rob works in the oil fields, and helps his father farm in the summer. Beverly is working for AGT and was married this spring to Ron Paley. They reside in Grande Prairie.

All through these years the farm was subsidized by Bob working out in the winter months. He hauled firewood to many of the local residents, charging \$6.00 a sleigh-bunk load; which was close to 2 cords. He milked cows and sold the milk to those living around the store: the Birds, Geo. Esselinks, the district nurse, the cafe, (yes there was a cafe in Blueberry), run by Helen Reeves (Morrison), about 1949-54. After Helen there was Carrie Juzwishin, whose husband Frank ran the garage, and lastly the Gordon Jacksons.

The summer of 1950 Bob drove the government maintainer for Lawson Scott between Blueberry and Spirit River. Many winters he worked in the bush, and he and John Doetzel put up ice one winter for the schools. Bob logged for John for two winters, going to Park Bros. sawmill. Later when the Park was started at Moonshine Lake, Bob worked there for a number of years, which meant being away from home in the summer months. Trying to work there and farm was too hectic, so Bob decided to buy more land. He bought 3 quarters from the Christenson brothers, rented $\frac{3}{4}$ from Keith Schallhorn, and a half



A picnic with Doetzel Kids.

from Joe Christenson, then he was really busy, but with the help of his wife and kids, he managed. When the family grew up and left, Bob sold the Christenson land to Henry Earl.

During these years, he and Harry Howell bought a small sawmill, which brought in a few dollars when needed. In the fall, he was out hunting with Jim Lightfoot, which kept us in meat. Bob also operated a backhoe for Jack Bird, when the water was being put in around the district. For the past few years he has operated one for Harold Davison.

When the children were grown, Arletta went to work at the Blueberry Creek School in 1972, as Sec.-Librarian, also taking on the Concession Booth at Moonshine Lake for the summer months of '74, '75, and '76. However, it was not all work and no play, and we made the usual pilgrimage back to Saskatchewan every year or two to visit the folks. Beth and Arletta went to England in 1972. While Arletta came back in a month, Beth stayed for six months and worked. When she came back she headed north for a year, then out to Victoria for two years. Beth and Lynn made another trip to England and Europe, then Beth and Henry had a trip to Bermuda. Robbie and Lynn made a trip to Bermuda the spring before Lynn passed away. It is an asset to have family in the Forces; one gets to visit many places, which normally one wouldn't do. Bob, Arletta and Beverly-Ann flew to Bermuda the Xmas of '77 to spend it with Doug and Alice, and this summer of '80 we plan on a motor trip up the new Dempster highway to Inuvik, where Doug and Alice are now stationed.

For the past 25 years Bob has served on several Boards. He has been chairman of the U.G.G. Local of Spirit River for 20 years, chairman of the local school board of the Blueberry Creek School, and

president of the Home and School Association for two terms. He was on the Nurses' Home Association, the Hall Board, and at present is the representative for this district on the L.I.D. 20 Recreation Board.

Arletta has been a member of the Goodwill Club since coming to the district, was president, then secretary for some years. She has made out the voters list for the past twenty years or so, and is now Recording-Secretary for C.U.P.E. Local 1824.

Three of the children belonged to 4-H, Lynn in the Clothing Club, and Dawn in the Garden Club, where she won "Best Garden Award" one year and has a book autographed by Grant McEwan. Robbie was in the Beef Club.



Winter Travel, 1956.

Some of the memories of the "good old days" concern threshing time. I would do the cooking for most of the bachelors, and would hear a lot of funny stories after supper while the men were finishing their last cup of coffee. Other good times were when Emma Doetzel would take us berry-picking with the horse and buggy; sometimes down the old moonshine trail to the Lake, and we would be gone all day. In the wintertime we would ride to the store in the old caboose, with the stove inside to keep us warm. There used to be a club house, where the Goodwill Club ladies held their meetings. It was Hiram Walker's old log home, which was moved to Jesse Caterer's land near the store. In it there were all kinds of books to read. The Hall had bunks in the corner, where the babies slept through the dances, before baby-sitting came into practice.

Some of the old-timers who lived here but who have passed on are remembered. Hiram Walker, who lived where the Doetzel farm is, Sam Henderson, who lived at Spinney's old mill for 15 years or more before moving to Joe Christenson's farm. He then moved into the Lodge at Spirit River, then on to Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie where he



Hampton Family.

passed away. The Christenson brothers: Juel, Carl, Tony and Melvin. Juel (Joe) and Carl have passed away. Tony still resides in Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River, and Mel lives in Creston, B.C. Jim Lomas and Margaret, Tom Gillespie, Ernie Dunham and his sister Mrs. Wilkinson, who came out from England to live with him, are also remembered.

One of the things Bob always remembers, came from an old-timer Dave Bozarth, who was the local blacksmith, "You'll find this is an easy country to make a living in, but making money is harder." Also when talking about the weather, which was the most common subject, he said, "When the weather is nice, you wouldn't leave if you could, and when it's bad, you couldn't if you wanted to." This is the type of roads we had.

Harry Hanrahan

Harry came into the district in 1919 with the veterans from World War I. He came from Ontario and took up a homestead, S-½ 21 T. 80 R. 8 W. 6. After a few years here he met and married a neighbor's daughter, Gladys Peever. The story goes that when they were ready to go into Spirit River by horse and buggy, Jack Campbell had hid the buggy wheels, which made them late for the wedding. In those days, people had to make their own entertainment, and this was just one of many jokes pulled off.

The Hanrahan's had no family until they adopted twins, Jerry and Jean, about 1926. A few years later Mrs. Hanrahan left, and Harry raised the children with the help of Ernie Dunham, who did the farming while Harry took care of the children. In 1934, at the age of 8, Jerry and a friend, Buddy Howard were drowned in a dug-out near the school. After Jerry

passed away, Margaret Lomas kept house for the Hanrahans. Jean grew up and about 1944, joined the Canadian Army. She met and married a young fellow from Ontario, where they are still residing.

Margaret passed away in 1959. Harry continued to farm until his death in Oct. of 1974 at the age of 80. Harry took an active part in the community. He was instrumental in the building of the school and the community hall. He helped plan the Blueberry Mtn. Cemetery, and was on the Board for many years. He was a member of the Spirit River School Division Board for many years, a member of the Spirit River Legion, and he acted as Returning Officer for many of the Provincial and Federal elections. After his death his farm was sold to Walter and Pat Kutrowski.

The Hewitts

by Bob Hewitt

We came to Blueberry Mountain from Rowley, Alberta on November 11, 1931, and it was a pretty good sized settlement in those years. Almost every half section had a homesteader's house on it, so one was never very far from a neighbor, and fine people they were. If anyone was building a house, barn, or what have you, everyone seemed to turn out to help; money never entered the picture. I believe that even if people had had money, no one would have thought about pay for that type of work — just good neighbors.

In those years the government gave free transportation to anyone wishing to leave the dried out areas, and Rowley was one of them. Well, my uncle, aunt and cousins, the Gelgains had moved to Blueberry Mountain a year earlier than we did, and they told us what the country was like and advised us to try it. So,



Bob Hewitt's House.

mother and my two sisters, Isobel and Hazel came by passenger train. However, my brother-in-law to be and I came by freight train with the livestock and machinery. I was too young to be riding a freight train, so I was in hiding most of the time. Whenever we'd stop to feed and water the livestock, Sammy would look out first to see if there were any railway cops around. If so, I'd have to hide in the hay or wherever I could, until the coast was clear.

We loaded out of Rowley November 1st, 1931, and didn't arrive in Spirit River until November 11th. It was cold and very frosty, but no snow. The first men I remember meeting were Bill Lindsay and Chester Reeves. They were hauling grain in wagons, and they told me that the Gelgains and sister Isobel would be in town that day to help at Spirit River. There was no water at the stockyards for our livestock, but Bill Lindsay said a fellow by the name of Yankie Shaw had a model "T" Ford truck and would haul a tank of water, so Yankie hauled the water. Sammy was not around very much, as he was a true vet. from World War I and after all, it was the 11th of November. I need not say more.

However, Uncle Norm, his wife, son Ed. and Isobel, arrived and we started unloading. Uncle Norm, sister Isobel, and Sammy drove team wagons hauling machinery, furniture, etc., and cousin Ed. and myself drove the cattle. What a long ride it seemed, to Cache One. This was a stopping place for travelers and freighters. There was a large log bunkhouse and barns there. The bunks were made of poles with hay on top. I'll never forget the first night getting into Cache One. The place was owned and run by natives called Testowichs. When we were about a mile from Cache One, two of the Testowichs came riding out of the bush on very spirited horses and yelling; I was sure they were after our scalps. However, they had come out to help us get the stock into a corral for the night. Even the pole bunks felt good to me that night, compared to boxcars.

To go back just a little on the trip — one night we had a long stop at Smith, and I saw a big fire in the woods with men around it. Sammy told me it was a jungle fire where the hobos cooked whatever they had, on this fire. So I took sardines and away I went. Did they ever put the run on me. I guess they thought I was a kid from town. They didn't know my home was also like theirs — a boxcar.

Now back to the next morning at Cache One. We headed out early, and, goodness the road that was there was terrible. However, our stock couldn't ramble very far away, as it was all bush. The first thing I remember of Blueberry was the log building in the middle of the road. This was used as a schoolhouse, dance hall, or whatever. Built by the veterans of

World War I, it was heated by a big barrel stove. There was even a bunk in the corner where the women could put their kids to sleep when they were at a dance. No babysitters in those days; everyone went.

We went to live on a place my uncle had rented from R. W. Caterer; Len Morrison lives there now. Well, there was a house to be built, barns, etc., and a lot of work to be done. Our house was a lean-to against Gelgains house (Duplex style), so we only had three walls to build that way. It had poles and sod for a roof. Goodness! what a place; poles covered with paper and dirt and whenever it chinooked, what a mess! Water ran through the roof everywhere. Poor Mother! how she'd try and keep up with the dirty drippings.

Hazel and I went to the log schoolhouse. Come spring, we took all our stock across the creeks. There was a large flat about four miles after we crossed the creeks, and a saddle horse could be ridden across this area. In many places, the hay was as high as the horse. Now this was where we intended to homestead, but we were not allowed to homestead at that time, so we were going to build and hope for the best. However, all this lovely hay turned out to have little or no food value. The Gelgains did build over there, and I believe lived there for a short while.

Early in that summer of 1932, my grandmother on mother's side became very ill, so Mom and I went to Innisfail, as that was our hometown before moving to Rowley after Daddy's death in 1927. Grandmother passed away, and I went to school back there while mother returned to Blueberry. I worked for an uncle and went to school, then returned to Blueberry Mountain in 1933 for the winter. By that time my folks had given up the idea of homesteading in the Josephine Country and we were living on the hill at the George Houston place. I had my first job in Blueberry working for Bill Lindsay while he hauled grain. Bill and I have been very good friends ever since.

My sisters Hazel and Isobel got married, and we all went different ways. Isobel and Sammy Kirkland continued to live at the hill. Hazel and Cecil Lalonde moved to where Jim Lindsey lives now, as Cecil was working for Roy White. Mother and I moved into a house on a place Bill Lindsay had rented, (the Willis place, now owned by the Grahams). I went to work for Bill Lindsay in the spring and fall. I guess I worked mostly in those years for Bill Lindsay, Dan Galbraith, and Jim Grover.

It was during those years that Blueberry Creek started a school, and mother boarded the teacher, Charlie Knight. Room and board and washing was \$12 a month. Speaking of Charlie! Goodness, he had

a terribly tough time. A young fellow from the city and landing in a place like this. The children were all Ukrainian and could speak no English. However, he came through with flying colors.

Then mother and I moved to a homestead I had taken, north of the Rod MacDonald place. I believe we lived there for two years, and then in 1941, I enlisted. Mother moved to a place called Woody's, to be close to Hazel and Cecil, and also to Isobel and Sammy. Hazel and Cecil were renting and farming McCormick's farm by then.

This almost covers our early years in Blueberry Mountain. I enlisted in the R.C.A.F., and returned to Blueberry Mountain in the fall of 1945. Blueberry Mountain was still a fair sized settlement, but there were a few of the Vets from World War I who sold to young Vets who wanted to farm in Blueberry.

Then this thing came along, called big farming, and now there are very few of the original people left in Blueberry. Gone forever I guess, is the friendly old light at night on every half section. This, I believe, is what is called progress.

The Howards

James Sheridan Howard was born March 17, 1867 in Jenny Lind Arkansas, and his son James Warren, was born Feb. 9, 1899 in Fort Smith, Ark. The Howards were one of the first settlers in the Blueberry district. They had attended a meeting in Spirit River, in June 1918, with The Milldrum's, The Peevers, and others whose names have been lost. At this meeting it was decided to seek homesteads in this area.

Warren was chosen to find a way in over the rugged bush country. He followed the old rail-road bed west of Spirit River for 17 miles then turned North, coming into the settlement by way of Moonshine Lake, known then on the maps, as "Mirage Lake". He travelled to the head waters of the Ksituan River, where the creek was shallower and easier for the wagons to cross.

Warren also made a survey line into Blueberry and when the government survey came through a year later, they found Warren's line only off by one foot. This was a remarkable feat for a young man about 19 with no formal training.

They then returned to Ryderwood, Wash. and worked in logging camps there. In 1924 Warren was married to Lavonne (Von). They ran a small grocery store in Portland, Oregon. In the meantime James Howard's wife passed away. Warren and Von were blessed with a son, James Warren Jr. (Buddy) in April, 1927. Warren Sr.'s naturalization papers were

final about the same time and when Buddy was six weeks old they moved to Blueberry to take possession of the homestead.

In Dec. 1929 their second child, a daughter, Lucille Lind was born. By this time my grandfather had brought his second wife, Cora, to Blueberry. They had a son, James Harley, in 1931, a daughter, Evelyn in '33 and another daughter, Barbara in March of 1936.

1934 was a double tragic year for the Warren Howards; Buddy and a playmate, Jerry Hanrahan, during a school recess, ventured to a nearby dam which was frozen over and were playing on the ice. The ice broke and they both fell in and were drowned. This was in late October, within the next two months their third child, Betty Jane was born and two weeks later died of pneumonia. Four more children were born to the Warren Howard family; Mary Lou, in '36, James Lawrence in '38, Bonita Jane in '41 and Philip Glen in '45. The last child was born in the Hardisty hospital; out of all seven children, he was the only one born in a hospital.

In 1944, the homestead was sold and the Howards moved to a farm at Amisk, Alta., James Howard and the family moved to Lesser Slave Lake for awhile, then came to Amisk also.

In 1950 Warren Howard sold out and moved to California. In 1951 James Howard passed away at Amisk, Alta. In 1965 Warren Howard passed away with a heart attack. In 1973 Mrs. Warren Howard passed away.

Now about the children, Lucille married Neil Chaffer, they had 4 sons, Jim, Ross, Robert, and John, and a daughter Louise. They have 4 grandchildren. Neil retired last December from 34 years with the California Forestry — they all live in Crescent City.

Mary Lou's marriage to Ralph Pittman ended in divorce after 5 years and four children, Laurie, Randy, Rick, and Gwen, who are all married now. In 1965, Mary Lou remarried, Bill Beard. He had one daughter Dorothy and together we had 1 son William Clayton, born in 1967. We have 6 grandchildren. Bill is Undersheriff of the county, Del Monte.

James Lawrence married Sharon Wells — they have a 10 year old son "Larry" and operate a Auto Parts store in Crescent City.

Bonita's marriage ended in divorce, she has a 15 year old son, Gary and works as a beautician in Crescent City.

Philip Glen married Deanna Blagdon, they have 3 children, Paula, Cindy and Wayne. They live in Brookings Ore.

Paul and Nancy Hrychan

Paul Hrychan was born June 25, 1905 in Krawec, Sarny, Yoworaw, West Ukraine, and came to Canada in August 1928. His brother Dmetro, who had been in Canada for two years, sent Paul his ticket to come to Waskatenau to live with his aunt, Mrs. John Rosa. He stooked there for a while, then went threshing with Mike Kozyk of Radway. It was a hard



P. Hrychan Family.

time for him as the crew were all English, and Paul didn't understand any English at all. However, he soon learned the language and made friends with all the crew.

In 1929 Paul went to work in B.C. for the extra gang on the railroad. He worked there for six months, then the gang closed down. At this time he had earned enough money to pay his brother for his ticket to Canada: — then the depression started. In 1930 Paul came to Blueberry Mountain where his brother had filed on a homestead for him. In the summer he and his friend would brush their land by hand and in the fall he went back to Radway for threshing. He did this for a few years, until he got himself a horse or two, and a cow. Now with animals to care for it was more difficult to leave the homestead. He had a few acres already cleared so there was work to do on his own.

When the war broke out he was called to the army and had to get a medical. He went to see the doctor, and being so small, the doctor asked him if he could carry a 60 pound pack. Paul's answer was "If I can't



Hrychan Girls.

make it in one trip, I can make it in two trips". He couldn't leave his homestead very easily then as he had more horses and more land cleared, so he got a postponement every six months or so. The war ended and he never did make the army.

On October 4, 1945, Paul married Nancy Letersky at Ksituan. They have three girls: Rose, married to John Woronowski, farms in the Ksituan District. They have two boys and a girl. Paulette who now resides in Calgary. Carol, married to David Gorman who is in the Armed Forces based in Calgary. They have two boys.

Paul and Nancy farmed at Blueberry Mountain until 1967, at which time they moved to Edmonton where they now reside.



Paul and Nancy.

The Dick Jackson Family

In July of 1947 Mel Jackson came to Spirit River on a scouting trip. He liked the area and decided this was a good place to settle. He wrote home to his parents, Dick and Edna Jackson, and brother Gordon in Darlingford, Manitoba, and the result was their move in November of 1947 to the Bronco Creek District, where they farmed till the spring of 1949. They then moved to Blueberry Mountain and rented the farm from "Mac" McCormick, and eventually bought it from him.



Mel Jacksons and Gordon Jacksons.

Mel was married in November, 1949 to Jessie McArthur from the White Mountain district. They moved to the "Woody" place in Blueberry Mountain, just west of the McCormick farm, and called that home for the next several years. Their first winter was spent at Spinney's Mill, just north of the present Moonshine Lake, in a 12'x14' granary. They shared their accommodation with another family of three, Bob and Lena Hick with their three month old son Ronnie.

For entertainment during the winter, they had parties of music and singing on the weekends, and needless to say this little shack was bursting at its seams. Life continued for them in this manner; farming in the summer and working in the bush during the winter months, until they moved into the Spirit River area in 1954.

While in Blueberry Mtn., Mel and Jessie had two sons, Richard and Ross. An additional son, Doug, and a daughter, Lynn, were born on the farm at Spirit River.

Rick the eldest son was married May 10, 1980, and with his wife Julie is now living in Enilda, Alta.

Ross and wife Wendy, and 3 sons are farming south and west of Spirit River.

Doug is engaged to Laurie Hessler from nearby Fourth Creek district and works with Scott Excavat-



Blueberry Mtn. Cafe.

ing in the local area.

Lynn married a Codesa farmer, Claude Bouchard, and with their family of two are farming at Eaglesham.

Mel and Jessie, having sold their farm, are presently living in Spirit River.

Mel's brother Gordon was married in October, 1953 to Muriel Smith of Blueberry Mtn. At the time he was selling Watkins products, and with his wife took over the operation of the Blueberry Mtn. Cafe from Frank and Carrie Juzwishin. The cafe, (long gone now), completed the 4th corner of Blueberry Mtn.: The store, the hall, the blacksmith shop, and the cafe each on a corner. The cafe did well with the construction crews for the power line and also oil crews in the area.



G. Jackson Family.

In 1954 they moved to Sexsmith and worked on the Geo. Shofner farm. They returned to Blueberry Mtn. in August, 1955 with their six month old baby daughter Arlene, where they farmed 1½ miles north of the Blueberry store on the Reyburn farm. While on the farm in Blueberry they had two sons, Glenn and David.

In 1956 Gordon took the job of driving a school bus, with the help of Muriel to fill in as spare driver when needed during busy times. They continued to do this until 1969 when they left the farm and moved to Kelowna, B.C. Gordon passed away in 1974 after a short fight with cancer.

Arlene is now Mrs. Randy Quigley, and they live in Kelowna, B.C. Glenn is presently in Chilliwack, B.C., and David is a welder and lives in Kelowna, working at Brenda Mines in Peachland, B.C. Muriel is remarried and is now Mrs. Cecil Schmidt and lives in Vernon, B.C.

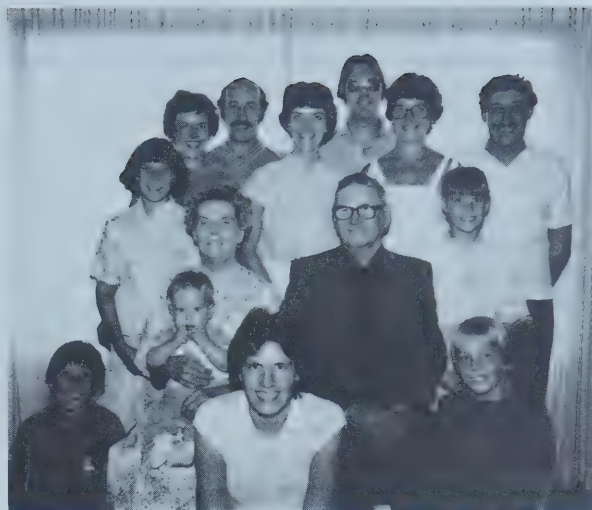
During their years in Blueberry, the senior Jacks — Dick and Edna's home was open house to their neighbors. Edna is now living in Morden, Manitoba. Dick continued to farm until the early 70's, and is now living at Pleasantview Lodge in Spirit River.



Jim Lomas with the Jackson Family.

Florence and Len Jeffery

Florence Corbett, at 19 years of age, left White-wood, Saskatchewan, March 16th, 1937, and arrived in Spirit River by train on the 19th accompanied by her mother. They were met at the station by Rod MacDonald with his team and sleigh. On the front part of the sleigh a small cab was built with a tiny wood heater inside. Imagine their surprise when they saw smoke pouring out of the stovepipe chimney! It



Len Jeffery Clan.

was a 30-mile drive to Blueberry Mountain, but they were very comfortable.

Father and others came about a week later with the freight, cattle and horses, a canary, cat, and dog, and two men looking for land. There was also the furniture from an 8 roomed house, including a piano. They bought Dewy Bateman's farm and had only a small cabin to move into. Furniture had to be stored, and the piano was left in town, to be sold eventually to the Bridgeview Hall.

Neighbors at Blueberry Mountain were Bernards, Mollingas, Bill Lindsays, and the Penny family. Mr. and Mrs. Rod MacDonald being old friends, wanted the Corbetts to settle in Blueberry Mountain. Mrs. MacDonald was an ardent worker in the Presbyterian Church in Saskatchewan, so as a result, got the W.M.S. started in Blueberry, and eventually the Presbyterian Church was built in 1949-50. Mrs. Corbett was always there to give a helping hand.

In 1939 Mr. Corbett with the help of neighbours, built a new house on the Bateman place. During the summer months Mrs. Corbett was usually to be found busy slicing up big loaves of homemade bread for sandwiches for all the hungry ball players old and young, that gathered for the Saturday night ball games at the Corbetts. She passed away in 1942 after a lengthy illness. A year later Florence went to Lethbridge with Marjorie Mitchell who was in training to be a nurse, and Florence worked in the same hospital about 8 or 9 months.

In December 1943 she married Len Jeffery. Len came up to the Blueberry area in 1938 from Vermilion where he had worked for a farmer. He originally came from Whitewood, Saskatchewan too, and knew the Corbetts well. After Florence and Len were married they rented Frank Tyler's farm and

eventually bought it. There were three daughters, Joan, Donna and Marjorie born while they lived there, in a log cabin for seven years.

In 1949 Mr. Corbett made the trip to Prince Edward Island where he was born. Later that same year he passed away.

The Jeffery girls all attended Blueberry Creek School. They rode bikes and horseback, and joined the Roy White children. There was no school bus there till the youngest girl started school, and Grade 9 was still being taught at Blueberry Creek School. High School students went to Spirit River by bus. The Jeffery neighbors at that time were Roy Whites, Reeves, and Bill Grahams.

Joan went to Vermilion in 1963 to take a Business Course. In 1964 she was employed as a secretary in the Agriculture Office in Fairview. While there she met and married Glen Shoemaker. They live in Fairview and have three daughters.

Donna took a Nursing Aid Course in Edmonton in 1964. Her first job was in Peace River Hospital. In 1967 she worked in Vernon, B.C. She met Lorne Shoemaker (brother of Glen) while there and they were married. They now live in Medicine Hat and have two young sons.

Marjorie took a Nursing Aid Course in Edmonton in 1970 and was employed at the Cancer Clinic for three years. She also worked in a doctor's office for two years. She met and married Bob Blair, and lives in Hinton. They also have two young sons.

In 1971 the farm was sold to Rod Graham and is now occupied by the Alex Graham family.

Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery retired to Spirit River in 1971. They are active members of the Senior Citizens' Club. Florence keeps busy knitting and reading in her spare time, while Len enjoys gardening. They also take several trips a year to visit their daughters and families.

The Keay Family

by Steve and Margaret Keay

I, David H., better known as Steve Keay, was born at Logiealmond, Scotland, a village about ten miles from Perth, in 1891. I learned to be a builder and stone mason working with my father. I came to Canada in 1913 and continued doing this work in and around Wapella, Saskatchewan, until I enlisted with the 10th Canadian Mounted Rifles in 1914, along with my future brother-in-law Angus McDonald. We were trained in Canada for some time before being shipped to England, then on to France early in 1915, where we served until the end of the first World War in 1918. I got back to Canada a few days ahead of Rod McDonald, just before Christmas 1918, and spent Christmas at Parkin, Sask., with the McDonald fam-

ily; Rod's sister Margaret being the reason for my return to the farm.

With World War I over and forgotten as far as we young fellows were concerned, getting into civilian life was our main concern. The Peace River was much talked about while we were in England, and the Canadian Government was advertising "free one-half section of land to all veterans."

After Christmas 1918, Rod, Dewey Bateman, and I made plans for a trip to search for land in the Peace River country, and bought tickets to Spirit River in March 1919. During the few days we stayed in Spirit River we heard a lot about Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek, and decided to go there. Rollie Hoggarth had joined us in Edmonton, so there were now four of us looking for land. We found land we were interested in, but upon wiring Ottawa, we found that it would not be surveyed till the following year. We could not find anything to suit us, so back we went to Spirit River.

Next we started for Blueberry Mtn., where we had been told there was open prairie land. We looked around on our own for a day or two, and picked up five half sections we thought we'd like — one-half section for each of the four of us, and one half section for Rod's sister Mary, whose husband Rod MacDiarmid had been killed overseas. We returned to town to file on the land, anxious to know who would be the first legitimate veteran homesteader in the Blueberry Mtn. district. I think Rollie was first, and I was second. My land was the north half Sec. 7-80-7-W6.

Back we went to Saskatchewan to get outfits, and after everyone had made the necessary purchases we headed for Wapella where we had booked two railway cars. All I had were 3 horses and 2 cows, but Rod and Bateman had livestock, some implements, and seed oats. It took us 8 days to get to Spirit River, then 7 long days on the trail to get to Rod's place. He had bought enough lumber to build a shack 16' x 12', so we went right at building, and soon had a roof over



Family and friends.

our heads and two double bunks, one on top of the other. Next we started getting out logs for buildings, but I didn't do much logging that summer as I was busy building barns, houses, and doing repair work around Spirit River at 25 cents per hour, for ten hours a day. After getting logs out we started a building bee. First we built Bateman's, then Hoggarth's, then Keay's. My building was 20' x 20' with the usual roof of poles and sod.

In the summer of 1920 I got a little breaking done, then I went back to Saskatchewan, and Margaret McDonald and I were married on October 27, 1920. Margaret was one of a family of seven, born at Parkin, Sask., where her parents James and Catherine McDonald had settled after coming from the Hebridian Islands of Scotland in 1883. She became a school teacher in 1915 and taught school till we were married in 1920.

When we got back to Spirit River, with my background of building and doing stone masonry, I was in great demand, building chimneys on houses, etc., etc. We stayed in town till about February 1921, then loaded up a grub stake and headed for our own home.



Portrait — Steve Keay, back left Angus McDonald, front right.

Time was rolling on and we were expecting a baby. We had planned on riding over the pack trail to be near the doctor in Spirit River, but in the middle of the night October 1st, things started to happen, and our oldest daughter Beth was born at home on the homestead, with a midwife Mrs. Stearns, and her Aunt Mary in attendance. When she was about nine months old we had to go into Spirit River over the pack trail, so I strapped her on my back, and she rode up and down the canyons sleeping or seemingly enjoying the ride. We were pretty well settled, but money was desperately needed, so I branched out into fire ranging, and Margaret made butter for some of the neighbors.

We lived in our comfortable log house in Blueberry until May 1924 when we moved in to Spirit River and lived there until 1949, except for the four years I was an officer in the Loyal Edmonton Regiment from 1940 until the end of the second World War. I had had postings in Calgary, Hamilton, Ont., and Grande Prairie during that time.

Our second daughter Norma was born in the Grande Prairie hospital in August of 1925, where her aunt Mary (MacDiarmid) Innes lived, and took care of Beth. Our third daughter Heather was born in Spirit River hospital in February 1934.

During our early days in Spirit River we came to meet many of the people who came to settle in Blueberry and surrounding districts, as we operated the Immigration Hall, where we also lived. I was in retail business, being agent for such firms as Imperial Oil, Massey Harris, and Ford Motors, as well as owning and operating a hardware store until we moved into Edmonton in 1949.

In 1967 we moved to Penticton, B.C., where we lived until Steve's death in January 1978, and I, Margaret now reside in my own apartment in Edmonton.

Beth's married name is Mrs. Fred Corus and they have two sons, Brian and Owen. Brian is married with two children and lives in Edmonton. Owen is not married, attends College and lives at home.

Norma, Mrs. Orval Poll, is a widow now. Her husband passed away in May 1979. Orval was stationed in Spirit River for several years in the R.C.M.P. Their son David is married with four children and lives in Edmonton. Norma lives in Red Deer, as do their two daughters, Susan (Mrs. Peter Shalagan) with two children, and Karen (Mrs. Alan Turner).

Heather's married name is Hughes. She and her husband Dale live in Hinton, Alberta. Their eldest son Bill is married, as is Dan, and they both live in Edmonton. Their daughter Cathy attends school and lives at home.

The Chris Keebler Family

Sent in by request of Mrs. Eva Hval

Mr. and Mrs. Chris Keebler arrived in Spirit River in 1919 by train, having come with their family from Canora, Saskatchewan. Mr. Keebler rented a farm at White Mountain for a couple of years. The family of six consisted of three daughters, Alice, Eva, and Dorothy, and three sons, Dewey, Harry, and Herbert. Alice and Eva had married in Saskatchewan and didn't come north with their parents, but Dorothy came with them.

Dewey was a veteran of World War I and took a homestead in Blueberry Mtn., the S ½-22-80-8 in 1920. When the second World War broke out he joined up and went overseas, then when it was over he brought his wife from England, and also his baby daughter. His wife didn't like Canada, so Dewey decided to take them to Vancouver where the climate would be more like England. While there they adopted a little girl to be company for theirs. However, his wife still was not settled and they went back to England where Dewey passed away a few years later.

Harry Keebler was married in Kamsack, Saskatchewan, and after spending some time on the homestead there, he moved to Spirit River. In due course they had a family of 12 children — one of whom passed away in infancy. The others were Shirley, Dorothy, Marjorie, Carrie, Edna May, Diana Fay, Gloria Jean, Patricia Gail, Maxine Lynne, Jackie, and Allan.

In 1922 Chris and his son Herb moved to Blueberry Mountain district and lived in Jack Campbell's house until they built their own. In the meantime Jack stayed with Howard Pegg. The Keeblers were not in their own place very long when Chris died. Mrs. Keebler donated her piano to the Community Hall before she left.

In 1924 Herb homesteaded on SW. 26-80-8. He had the first store in Blueberry for a short while, and hauled mail for a number of years. He also drove for Jesse Caterer, and ran a light plant and a Community Movie Projector at Blueberry Mountain. Herbert and Jean Keebler had a family of seven — Herbert, Lester, Violet, Maurice, Irvin, Donna, and Gary.

John and Susan Kozij

John Kozij was born in Ukraine, in the village of Cerny, to Mike and Maria (nee Malanchuk) Kozij on September 6, 1904. He was the first son and fourth child of their family of seven children. His siblings in order of birth were Katy, Pearl, Eva, John, Nick, Alex and Steve. Besides these seven children and

their parents, John's grandfather also lived with the family, which made a total of ten people living together in a small five room house, supported by grain farming on nine scattered acres of land. The following is John's recollection of his early life:

"I went to school until I was thirteen years old. Few children went to school beyond this age. When I finished school I worked as a cow hand, herding my father's cattle daily on the open range close to my village. I would herd the cattle each morning to the range, herd them home at dinner time, have dinner while my mother milked the milk cows, then herd them back to the pasture until nightfall. When I wasn't looking after my father's cattle, I helped my father tend to his grain crops on our nine acres of land. These acres were scattered throughout the county, and were not all in one area. We seeded by hand, and harvested with scythes, pounding the grain out manually with sticks. Of course, I didn't earn money working for my father, but worked occasionally for a nearby rich farmer, doing the same work for some silver for each days work. Each day's pay was enough to buy a package of cigarettes.

By 1928 there was no work, no money, and no room at home to live. There were many advertisements in the papers — "Come to Canada", and three of my friends — Bill Kryko, Pete Kolotylo and Matt Hrychan had already left the village in 1926 to try this Canada — the country of riches and opportunity. In 1928 the Priest helped me to sign the proper papers and take the necessary steps to leave my mother, father, sisters and brothers to give myself a chance to make something in this far away country — Canada.

I boarded the ship in April 1928 and set foot on Canadian soil about one month later, going up the St. Lawrence River, landing in the Quebec Port. My friend from my village, Paul Hrychan, came shortly after me, in July. In fact, during the years between 1923 to 1928, thirty-three people from my village came to Canada. The same day I landed in the Quebec Port I boarded the train for Western Canada and arrived in Edmonton on May 11, 1928. The next day, May 12, 1928 the Whitestar Company, which was the company that assisted me to emigrate to Canada, helped me get a job to work on the "Extra Gang" for the Railway — shovelling gravel under the railway ties. I started at Wetaskiwin, working for 30¢ an hour. I worked for the railway doing this job, going south through Calgary, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat until freeze-up. When freeze-up set in, I went back to Edmonton and found nine of my friends from my village in Ukraine and we all went together to Waskatenau, north of Edmonton. There we met a farmer who let us stay in an abandoned house on his

farm for free. We pooled our money and bought three pigs to butcher for meat to eat in the winter. We would cut wood for this farmer, and for pay would receive potatoes, eggs and sauerkraut to eat. We stayed there for the winter, and in April 1929 all nine of us went back to Edmonton looking for work. We were all lucky and found jobs, although at this time we all separated, as we all found work at different places. I got a job in Prince George, B.C., working on the railway again, and worked from town to town, landing at Terrace, B.C. when freeze-up set in again. At this time I went back to Waskatenau, and lived at a different farmer's place for the winter of 1929-1930.

In the spring of 1930 I went back to Edmonton for work — but there was none to be found. I ended up eating at a "Soup Kitchen". This was Government sponsored, where two times a day we would be served a bowl of porridge — and were sure glad to get it. This was the hungriest and hardest part of my life since landing in Canada, and lasted all spring, summer and fall of 1930. In the beginning of 1931 I was lucky enough to go to Athabasca and cut brush with an axe for some farmers there, and the Government paid me \$1.00 per day. The Government gave me an axe free and paid for my board. At that time a shirt cost \$2.50, so I worked for two and a half days to buy one shirt, and two days for a pair of mitts, which cost \$2.00. When this job was finished I went back to Edmonton, and back to the soup kitchen as there were no other jobs available. When I was standing in line at the soup kitchen one day, waiting for my bowl of porridge, I saw Matt Hrychan there. He was in Edmonton looking for work and he told me that he and Steve Letersky both had a homestead in Blueberry Mountain, near Spirit River. We went together to southern Alberta to see if we could get a job harvesting for the farmers there. We did, and when freeze-up set in, I went with Matt to Blueberry Mountain. I stopped first at Grande Prairie and filed on homestead N.E. ¼, Section 1, Township 80, Range 8, West of the 6th Meridian for \$10.00. We stayed with Steve Letersky in his house the winter of 1931-1932.

In the spring of 1932 Matt finished his house on his homestead and some of the other men moved in with him. In the fall of 1932 we all went back to southern Alberta, finding jobs again harvesting for the farmers there. We came back to Blueberry Mountain at freeze-up and for the winter of 1932-1933 I stayed with Pete Paish. Pete had horses and together we cut logs for me to build my own house. In the summer of 1934 I built my own house on my own homestead. I only had enough money to build just the walls — no roof — and my house stood like that for one year. During the winter of 1934-1935 I went to

work at Jasper, at the Relief Camp, cutting trees, cleaning the park, etc., for \$5.00 per month.

In the spring of 1935 I went back to Edmonton and got a job on the railway again, working at Slave Lake. In the fall, I went back to southern Alberta, getting a job harvesting and worked there until freeze-up, at which time I went back to Blueberry Mountain. When I got there I got a job working for Walter Mitchell for \$15.00 a month, and lived at his place the winter of 1935-1936. In the summer of 1936 I had enough money to finish my own house, and made money to live, by making and selling moonshine. That spring I started clearing my own land with an axe and grub-hoe. I cleared six acres that summer and was on my way! Frank Buchmeier had a team of horses and broke my six acres and I worked for him as a farm labourer to pay him back.

In 1937 I cleared twelve more acres with my axe, and Bill Solomiany broke this for me. I paid him \$4.00 an acre. In 1938 I cut fourteen more acres with my axe. Pete Paish broke this for me with his horses and I worked for him to pay this off. In 1939 I cleared seven more acres and again Bill Solomiany plowed this for me for \$4.00 an acre. Bill and Matt Solomiany rented this cleared land from me starting in 1936.

In the winter of 1939-1940 I cut logs on Government land to get logs to build a log barn and granary. I paid for the shingles and lumber for the roofs by selling moonshine at 50¢ for one beer bottle full of moonshine. Between the years 1937-1940 I would take orders from people for moonshine for Christmas. They would give me their orders in advance and pay me \$5.00 for one gallon of moonshine. Three days before Christmas they would start coming for their Christmas liquor, just like people do now at the Liquor Store. One of my regular customers was the late Doctor Law. He thought I made real good moonshine! I kept making moonshine and working on my homestead during the years 1941 and 1942, working for Keith Brothers at harvest time both falls of those two years.

It was in the fall of 1942, I was in the field working for the Keith Brothers, when Paul Hrychan and Pete Paish came to me in the field on horses with a letter for me from the Government. Paul always used to get my mail for me whenever I was away. The letter said I was to join the army and to go for a medical check-up immediately. I was to go to WAR!

I walked to Spirit River that same day and went to see Doctor Law for my check-up. Doctor Law said I was in A-1 shape to join the army so I quit Keith Brothers the same day. This was in September 1942. Doctor Law sent my medical report to Edmonton and

on October 16, 1942 I got a letter from Ottawa stating that I was accepted for the army. I went to Grande Prairie for my uniform and spent two months there for my basic training. On December 16, 1942 I was sent to Shilo, Manitoba to the Artillery Training Camp, where I was trained to use a gun for war. On April 4, 1943 I was sent to England for training with cannons. I stayed there until October 1943, at which time I was sent to Italy, to fight on the Front Line. All during the war I was always in the Front Line, and I fought in Italy, France, Belgium and Holland during the years 1943 to 1945. On May 8, 1945 we received the news — THE WAR WAS OVER!!

I was sent to Alkmarr, in Holland, on May 8, 1945. While we were stationed there I met a young Dutchman who could speak English and who would come and visit us soldiers. He was very nice and one day invited me and another soldier to his father's house. There I met this beautiful girl, who was this man's cousin, and who was living with his family. Her name was Geertje Lanting. I made up my mind that minute that I was going to marry this girl, and told her cousin to ask her father if I could marry her. He told Geertje in Dutch what I had asked him and she laughed and said "That man is crazy! I'm not going to marry him — he must be forty years old! I just met him today, and he thinks I am going to marry him?" Her Uncle told me that we were welcome to come to his house and enjoy a family life with them, but to leave his girls alone, he was not giving his girls to Canadian soldiers.

Well, I kept going back there and finally she said she would go with me; and her girlfriend with another soldier, to the Canteen. A Canteen was a building only for soldiers, where we could eat, drink and dance, and bring a girlfriend. We all went on one motorbike and one bicycle. One of us men would drive the motorbike with our girlfriend sitting behind us, and the other man sitting behind her. The other girl would sit on the bicycle beside us, and the man sitting at the back of the motorbike would push her bike with his hand so that she could keep up with the motorbike. The next trip we would change positions.

On June 17, 1945 Geertje and I were engaged! We went to see Geertje's parents. Her little brother saw us coming and yelled "Here comes Zus with a Canadian soldier!" His father asked him what I looked like, and he said "Just like Grandpa!" I guess they approved of me, because on October 25, 1945 we were married. My wife's name was Geertje, but all her family called her Zus (meaning Sis). Well, you just can't make a Ukrainian man talk like a Dutch man. I couldn't say Geertje, and I couldn't say Zus, so I called her Susie, and that is what she has called

herself ever since. Because we were the most important couple on our wedding day, Susie's father rented a horse and carriage for us to ride in to the Town Hall and to the church to be married. Everyone else came on bicycles. I traded twelve packages of cigarettes for twelve bottles of Cognac for the wedding. I was a valet for the Major after the war was over, and he gave us six bottles of Cognac for a wedding present. I brought 2,000 cigarettes and some hard tack candy for the wedding guests, and Susie's father butchered two sheep for the supper.

On November 1, 1945 I left my bride in Holland and returned to Canada. On January 1, 1946 I arrived at Calgary, and on January 4, 1946 I arrived home in Blueberry Mountain. I had a good friend and his wife, Tom and Mein Mollinga in Blueberry Mountain who were Dutch people, and I always went to Mein to write my letters to Susie, and she would read me the letters that Susie wrote to me. That same January, when I got back all my friends made me a wedding dance, and the only one who wasn't there was my bride!

On August 25, 1946 I got a telegram — my wife was to arrive in Spirit River on August 29th!! I sure was busy cleaning up my house, and getting rid of all my beer and moonshine making equipment. Even the neighbors helped me get everything ready for Susie. We got everything fixed up in time, and I even spent all of my money on new furniture. As soon as Susie got off the train I said "Hello Honey, you got some money?" She had \$200.00 and we bought seed wheat and our first chickens with it. I asked Jim and Julie Popil who were owners of the Spirit River Hotel, to drive us home to Blueberry Mountain from Spirit River, and poor Susie got so sick from traveling up and down the creeks. It was a lot different from her cobblestone streets in Holland. My beautiful city girl had to learn to milk cows, burn brush piles, pick roots, garden, everything she had not done in Holland. But it never changed her. She is still the most beautiful woman in the world!"

At this typical compliment from her husband, Susie joined into the conversation. "Yes," she recollected, "I certainly had a lot to learn about my new homeland. Coming from a crowded city with electricity, centralized heating and cobblestone, I was terribly green about farming in Canada in 1946. I guess I'm something like the cigarette ad that says "You've come a long way, Baby". But it was all worth it, although many times I wondered if I shouldn't have convinced Johnny to take up one of the trades the Government offered to Returned Soldiers. There were many days when we didn't know where we were going to get the much needed and



John and Susie, 1946

very scanty dollar, but the Lord provided, and we always made it through each crisis, a little bit stronger and wiser to meet the next one."

Susie was born on October 10, 1917, in Gasselte, Holland, and christened Geertje Lanting by her parents, Geert and Gesiena (nee Pieters) Lanting. She was the second of nine children, who, in order of birth were Henkie, Geertje (Susie), Henry, Treintje, Jan, Janny, Janna, Albert and Tinie. Her father was a construction worker in the town of Gasselte.

"I went to school until I was fourteen years old, and then worked as a maid for various wealthy families until I was seventeen years old, when I went to work in a clothing factory. When I was twenty-two years old, I went to my Uncle's place in Alkmarr for a holiday, and ended up living with his family and working for a Doctor there.

One day my cousin brought home this Canadian soldier, who immediately told my cousin he was going to marry me! I just laughed and thought he was either crazy or a complete fool. Well, I turned out to be the one fooled, because four months later I was married to this same soldier from Canada, and my whole life was completely changed. I had been swept off my feet by Johnny's love and sincere nature, and suddenly found myself married to a man from a foreign country, and about whom I really knew nothing, and was preparing to leave my homeland and family for a country where I knew no one, perhaps never to see my mother and father, and sisters and brothers again. My fears subsided somewhat when I received letters from a Dutch lady, Mein Mollinga, in Canada, who was a friend of my husband, and who assured me in her letters that my husband, who had returned to Canada before me, was indeed a good man and would be a good hus-

band. So, with the knot in my stomach somewhat subsided, and with many tears and embraces, I left my family in August 1946 to board the ship that would take me across the ocean to my new husband and new homeland. On the long trip over, I met another Dutch woman who was also a war bride, who was going to the same area as I was, as she was going to Sexsmith. We became friends which lasted for quite a few years. After travelling for many days by boat, on which I was constantly seasick, until I touched ground again, and then more days travelling by train in Canada, I finally arrived at Spirit River and Johnny met me at the station. Friend's of Johnny, and later good friends of mine, had a car and they drove us to Blueberry Mountain, and I was HOME. Lots of bush, no roads, no running water, no electricity, no vehicle, but HOME. The neighbors were wonderful, teaching me how to bake, plant a garden, and generally be a good farmer's wife.

Because Johnny was a Returned Soldier, the Government provided us with our first tractor, a little grey Ford, and Johnny taught me how to drive it, and I would help him in the fields, driving the tractor, picking roots and stooking. The first time I went burning piles I thought I would treat myself to a nice tan and dressed in shorts and halter top. Well, with the heat from the sun all day, and the heat from the burning piles, plus the wind, I burned all of my skin completely, first turning a brilliant red and then losing all of my skin. It sure was a painful lesson to learn how to dress when burning piles! I had a terrible time getting used to a wood burning stove. I kept forgetting to put wood in it to keep it going, and would have to light the stove twenty times a day. The first winter I was in Canada, we had an air tight heater and I was always afraid of it, as it would always pop and bang. One day Johnny was away and it was getting colder and colder in the house until I talked myself into lighting the heater. I put a match to the kindling and paper, the heater made one huge BANG and the fire flamed up and burned off my eyebrows. Thank heaven the fire never caught the rest of my hair! After that, I was even more scared of that darn heater.

We were married for four years when I was finally expecting our first baby. I was attending a doctor in Sexsmith for my prenatal, and a visit to my doctor took two days! First, in the morning Johnny would drive me to the Blueberry Mountain store on the tractor, and I would wait there until I would find a ride with someone going to Spirit River. At Spirit River I would take the train to Sexsmith, see my doctor, and then spend the night in the Sexsmith hotel. The next morning I would take the train back to Spirit River, and then catch a ride with someone going to Blueberry Mountain. If there was no one

going to Blueberry Mountain that day, I would spend the night at the hotel in Spirit River. Jim and Julie Popil would give me a room free, as they knew we had no money for hotel rooms.

I was to stay in Sexsmith the week before the baby was due, so that I would be there when I went into labor, but the baby decided to come early and I went into labor at home. Johnny went to Marjorie Mitchell, the Public Health Nurse in Blueberry Mountain, and brought her home to deliver the baby. She examined me and said she could not deliver the baby, that I needed a doctor. Johnny went to Vern Galbraith, who had a car, to take me to the doctor. He couldn't come down the road to our farm, as the road was snowed in, so Johnny then had to go to Paul Hrychan, who had horses and a cutter, and he came with them to pick me up and take me to the main road, where Vern was waiting with the car. Johnny and Marjorie went with me in Vern's car to Doctor Law in Spirit River, as I couldn't make it any further to my doctor in Sexsmith. I was in hard labor all day and all night, and Dr. Law and Johnny slept at the hospital in the next room. Finally, at 2:00 p.m. on February 13, 1949 I gave birth to a baby daughter, and we christened her Mary Tinie Susan (Tina). When the Sisters went to Johnny to tell him that at last I had the baby, they asked him what he wanted — a boy or a girl. He replied "I don't care — just Baby." Tina was our only child.

In 1953 we were financed by the Veteran's Land Act to buy another quarter of land. We bought N.W. ¼ Section 1, Range 8, Township 80. We bought this quarter from Fred Solomiany and there were only five acres open. Over the next eight years we broke 130 acres on it in different stages. Every time we got a little money, we hired someone with a cat to break a little bit of land.

All those years, our only means of transportation



John and Tina in cutter.

was our little Ford tractor. Johnny built a little bench on the back, and we would go with the tractor to church, picnics, dances, the store and the neighbors. In the winter we went with our two horses, King and Bill, and a sleigh.

In 1955 we bought our first vehicle — a second hand International truck. We were so happy! I kept getting up all night to look out of the bedroom window at our truck. I just couldn't believe that we finally had a truck. I had to make sure that it wasn't a dream.

In 1960 Johnny built two bedrooms, a pantry and a sun porch onto our house because in 1961 my mother was coming from Holland to stay with us for a holiday. Since I had left home in 1946, I had never seen any of my family. I lost my younger sister and my daddy during this time, and that was the hardest thing for me to accept since coming to Canada. They were dead, and I had never seen them since I left home. I went into a deep depression for a long time, until one day my little girl said to me "Mommy, why aren't you like my Mommy anymore? You used to sing and laugh and play with me, and now you just cry". Her statement finally opened my eyes to realize that my baby and my husband needed me, and my depression was hurting both of them. So, with God's help, and their help, we were a family once more!

Mom came in the spring of 1961 and we were so happy to have her with us. Mom had to adapt to country living just like I did, and had some hair-raising experiences during her year's stay with us. One incident I recall is that late that summer, the cows got out and Johnny and I went after them. Mom came later to see if she could help us. Tina and a friend of hers lighted the gas lamp and set it too close to the kitchen curtains. The curtains caught fire! Tina grabbed the lamp with an old coat and threw it outside, screaming Oma! Oma! The house is on fire! Mom was a quarter of a mile away, and heard her screaming and started running for the house. She got so frightened that she lost her false teeth! Luckily, the fire went out after the curtains burned, and we found Mom's teeth.

We got the power on the farm in 1963 and it made us feel that we were living in luxury. With the power, we eventually got a fridge, deepfreeze and T.V. Times were improving and over the years we saved \$400.00 to be used for me to go back to Holland to visit my Mom and brothers and sisters and their families. I was to go back the summer of 1967, but at Christmas time in 1966 the motor went out of our truck. The money we had saved had to be spent on a new motor, so I was unable to go to Holland. Instead, my mother came back to Canada that year and was here for Tina's graduation from school.

In 1968, after twenty-two years, I finally went home to Holland for a visit in the summer. That fall, in November, our daughter married Ron Doetzel, son of John and Emma Doetzel, also from Blueberry Mountain. They presented us with our first and only grandchild, Sheila Jacqueline, in the summer of 1969.

In 1975 we sold our farm in Blueberry Mountain and moved to the town of Spirit River, where we live close to Ron, Tina and Sheila.

In 1976 Ron and Tina bought Ron's father's farm

in Blueberry Mountain, and also leased a homestead, and now are busy trying to build them both up. Funny — history DOES often repeat itself, doesn't it?"

The Family of Mrs. Mary MacDiarmid as related by Eloise (MacDiarmid) Umbach

In July, 1919, my mother, Mrs. Roderick MacDiarmid, a war widow, my sister Lila and myself left Whitewood, Saskatchewan, and journeyed by C.P.R. to Edmonton, thence by the E.D. and B.C. — sometimes called the Exceedingly Dangerous and Badly Constructed railway — to Spirit River where we were met by my uncles Rod and Angus McDonald. The reason for this great adventure was to file on homesteads in an area known as Blueberry Mountain, which had been opened for Veterans. Uncles Rod and Angus had come earlier to build the log cabin which was to be our home.

The next link on our trek was by horseback, a terrifying trip of some twenty-five miles for two little girls. At one point the banks of the Ketchikan were so steep we dismounted and walked the horses, then forded the little creek.

I can recall a few incidents which happened during the three years we spent there, and some of the people I remember by name. One great event occurred when Steve Keay, a war buddy of my uncles and also a homesteader, went back to Saskatchewan to marry Aunt Margaret. She must have been the first bride in the district. When their first daughter arrived we felt we had a playmate.

Although Lila and I were not very old, we did sense a feeling of fear whenever our uncles had to go to Spirit River for supplies. This trip, incidentally, was farther by wagon than the twenty-five miles by horseback, took more than two days and left mother and daughters home alone. I've never forgotten the mosquitoes; they were mammoth in size and millions in numbers.

Some names I recall — Mr. and Mrs. Sterns, Howard Pegg, Vic Mitchell, Dewey Batemen, Andy Ellison, Rollie Hogarth, Ted Wheatman. Ted was a musician and, since we had the only piano in the district, he sometimes came over to play it.

At Christmas our piano was hauled by sleigh to the newly finished hall where there was a great gathering. There was no school and not much hope of one being built. Many homesteaders were bachelors so there were not many families, and others did not rank education as very important. Mother had been a school teacher so was anxious to have her daughters in class. Later, we moved to Spirit River where schools had been established for some time, with Miss Henderson as our first teacher.



Ron, Tina and Sheila.



John, Susie, Tina, Ron and Sheila.

In 1923 Mother married Donald Innes who was the Soldier Settlement Supervisor. A transfer moved us to Grande Prairie in 1924, where we lived until Dad went into business in Sexsmith in 1928. Our sister, Mary, was born in Grande Prairie in 1925.

Mother and Dad retired to Vancouver in 1947. Mother died in 1973, Lila in 1974 and Mary (Mrs. W. J. Murray of Grande Prairie) in 1980. Dad now lives in Shaughnessey Hospital in Vancouver. I (Eloise) live in Camrose with my husband, Norman Umbach. Our daughter, Wendy (Mrs. Earle Barry) lives in Camrose with her husband and children Kimberley and Jeff; our son Peter lives in Edmonton.

Uncle Angus had returned to Saskatchewan before proving up his land. There he married and was a farmer until the mid '30s when he moved to Spirit River and bought the J. Dodge farm between Spirit and Rycroft. He later moved to Vancouver Island where he died; his wife lives in Burnaby.

Uncle Rod, after proving up his land, returned to Saskatchewan to the home farm. Some years later he returned with his wife, Aunt Mae, to the original homestead at Blueberry. There they built a new home, farmed and became active members of the community, especially in the Presbyterian Church. Following Aunt Mae's death Uncle Rod remained on the farm while the Grahams rented the land and eventually became the owners. Rod died in 1974 and is buried in Blueberry Cemetery, as is Aunt Mae.

Since I lived at Blueberry only three pre-school years, and have not returned until now, my recollections are quite limited, but they may help others to piece together more of the stories of the early days.

W. J. and Olive McCormick by daughter Elaine Tuhten

My father, W. J. McCormick was born in the old brick house that had been in the family for two or three generations at Caledon, Ontario. His parents were Irish and Canadian. He came to Blueberry Mountain as a returned soldier to take a homestead following World War I. I believe he, W. Collins, W. Tarr, and Gary Rayburn were the first soldiers to take homesteads there, and each claimed a half section of land. Later my father acquired Gary's property when he decided conditions were too rough for him and returned to Ontario.

My mother Olive was born in Berlin, New Hampshire, U.S.A., of English and French parents. She was married at an early age in Kamsack, Saskatchewan, where her father had a homestead. Later, she and her young son Edwin Scott came to Blueberry, and she married my dad who was living on the Rayburn place (now owned by Arnold and Louise Schulz) at that time. Conditions were very

SYLVANIA ELECTRIC APPOINTMENT



W. J. McCormick.

W. J. McCORMICK

G. C. Bevan, General Sales Manager, Lighting Products Division, Sylvania Electric (Canada) Ltd. has announced the appointment of W. J. (Bill) McCormick as National Sales Manager — Lighting Products Division.

Mr. McCormick graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of British Columbia. After three years with Ontario Hydro he joined Sylvania in 1957 as Commercial Engineer in Central District. He moved to Montreal in 1958 and in 1962 was promoted to Product Sales Manager, Commercial and Industrial Lamp Division. He returned to Toronto as District Sales Manager in 1966. In his new position, Mr. McCormick is, once again located at Sylvania Canada's head office in Montreal. ***

primitive then — one room log shacks, wood stoves, oil lamps, washboards, Winnipeg couches, board or mud floors, and bunks for beds.

My father bought the Blueberry Store from Nick Badiuk in 1936, and living quarters were added on. I recall the bench around the stove in the store, where people visited while shopping. There was a hitching post out front. The huge coffee grinding machine and the glassed in cheese box with cutting blade, are things I clearly remember. Raisins, prunes, etc. came in large wooden boxes and were measured into paper bags as requested. Sugar also came in bulk — no prepackaging in those days.

We had seven acres at the store, and kept a cow or two. After Ed (my half brother) joined the army, I remember milking the cow, then walking a mile to

school. It was a one-room school with grades one to eight. We moved to Vancouver in 1946, and Bill and I, as teenagers, had great adjustments to make. However, having come from stubborn stock, we didn't let our one-room-country-school background get the better of us. Bill, Pat, and I are all graduates of U.B.C., and Maureen became a Lab. Technician.

Bill is an electrical engineer, lives in Toronto, is married, and has three daughters.

Elaine is a teacher — married Cliff Tuhten in 1949 — has a daughter Kelly, and a son Trevor.

Pat Matovich is also a teacher and has two boys.

Maureen married Howard Burke and has two girls. They live in Victoria.

In 1964 Cliff and I took Dad on a trip to Blueberry Mountain, and he took along some small chestnut trees to be planted on the Rayburn place — “as a memorial to McCormick”, he said. He died of cancer in 1965.



Our bridge is out. “Ksituan”

Some of my mother's recollections:

We were living in Spirit River while dad still had the store at Blueberry. One Saturday I loaded the kids into the car to go to Blueberry. I could see heavy smoke, and as we neared the last timber stretch the flames were all around us. I just stepped on the gas, but it was a “scary” experience. Men were herding Bill Bortz's pigs and animals towards the store, and men were on the roof of the store with water and sacks to strike out any sparks. Needless to say, I got a bawling out for attempting such a trip, but we got thro' without any accidents.

One fall we had a threshing crew for six weeks: snow, rain, you name it — we had it. The men went hunting etc., and straggled in at all hours expecting to be fed. I had Annie Hrychan helping me at that time.

I must mention dear Miss McEachran who was with me for two or three years, helping and loving

my two young ones at the store. She was a darling! She and my son Ed. kept store when Mack and I went to Ontario in 1940. Then there was Miss Arneson the District Nurse coming to the aid of a sick horse at threshing time on the Rayburn place. We rushed back to the store and got linseed oil, which she helped administer. That horse was on his feet in no time. I also remember Libby Sage, another District Nurse who was taking a young wife to town in a two-wheeled rig via the short cut. I put the woman to bed in the girl's room, but she died (the third wife of this farmer who commented “Just when I needed her for harvest”).

Rod and May McDonald

Rod McDonald's parents, James and Catherine McDonald came from the Hebridian Islands of Scotland with their parents in 1883, along with a boat load of other families, sponsored by Lady Cathcart. They travelled to Wapella, Saskatchewan, and took up homestead land in that area, as that was as far as the C.P.R. was completed at that time. Both parents had the surname McDonald, tho' they were not related, but James and Catherine were married in 1885. Their land was in the area now called Parkin, near White-wood, Sask., where they raised their family of four sons, Rod, Angus, Dan and Norman, and three daughters, Katie, Mary, and Margaret.

Rod was born June 28, 1886, the oldest of the family. He lived on his father's farm until he enlisted in the first World War, when he and his brother-in-law Rod MacDiarmid joined up together. They spent some time overseas together, until Rod MacDiarmid was killed in action. Rod spent four years overseas serving with the Infantry, Artillery, Cavalry, and Canadian White Horse.

At the close of the war in December, 1918 he returned home to Saskatchewan, and in March 1919 he came to the Peace River country with Steve Keay, Dewey Bateman, and Rollie Hoggarth. He chose S½ 30-80-7-W6 as his homestead then returned to Saskatchewan to collect whatever he felt necessary to start work on his homestead. The men had two railway cars of settlers effects, including horses, cows, machinery, and Rod had a crate of chickens. When arriving at Red Deer on a Sunday the train was delayed for several hours, so the men decided it was a good time to water and feed the livestock. When Rod was feeding the chickens he left the lid open to get some water for them, and on his return with the water, found chickens all over the place. It was a sight to see — the three men with the help of a dog chasing chickens all over Red Deer when people were going to church. Most of the chickens got under the station



Mr. and Mrs. Rod McDonald.

house, and without the help of the dog would never have been recovered.

The trip took 8 days from Whitewood to Spirit River, then seven days from Spirit River to the homestead at Blueberry Mtn. over mud roads. Since Rod had lumber, his house was the first to be built — giving them a roof over their heads. Rod's sister Mary MacDiarmid and her two girls came and kept house for him. He did some clearing and breaking on this homestead, until the fall of 1922 when his father passed away in Saskatchewan; then returned home to the Parkin district, having his own land near his father's place.

May McEwen was born in Ontario in 1876, of Scottish parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald McEwen. May had one sister and one brother.

Mrs. McEwen was a very dynamic person, contributing much to the country in which she lived, and naturally was a great influence on May's life. At the age of five May was stricken with rheumatic fever and was under the tender care of Dr. Emily Stowe. Dr. Stowe and Mrs. McEwen worked together in securing the Municipal franchise for Women of Ontario, and opening of Medical Colleges to women students.

In 1884 Mrs. McEwen and her family moved to Manitoba to a farm four miles north of Brandon, which became known as "Tullichewen", and after moving to Manitoba Mrs. McEwen was not long in becoming active in church and community affairs. She organized Auxiliaries of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, and from these Auxiliaries the Brandon Presbyterial of the Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was constituted in 1886.

May married James Henderson of Brandon, and lives in Brandon until after his death. While in Brandon May was active in the life of the community and the church. She was Corresponding Secretary for Brandon Presbyterial for years, and in 1925 she attended the Pre-Assembly Congress of the church.

Some years after her husband's death, a friend of hers, Katherine MacDiarmid asked her to go back to Whitewood, Saskatchewan with her. It was at this time that she met Rod, and in October 1929, they were married in Brandon. They lived on Rod's farm in the Parkin School District, with Whitewood the closest town, eleven and a half miles distant. While there both Rod and May were active in the community and church. Rod was Superintendent of the Sunday School, and May taught a Bible class. May was also President of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary in Whitewood, driving by horse and buggy or sleigh in all kinds of weather and roads, to attend the regular meetings.

When things got tough during the '30's, with poor crops, depression prices etc., they decided to move north to Blueberry Mountain and live on Rod's homestead. Rod held an auction sale, and from his sale book the following were some of the prices received:

1 Mower	\$16.00
1 Sleigh	16.50
6 Hogs	3.85
2 year Heifer	8.00
Brown Mare	60.00
Sulky Plow	\$7.00
Disk Harrow	35.00
3 year Cow	14.00
Calf	2.50
Bay Mare	52.00
Harrow Cart	\$6.00
Gang Plough	21.00
5 year Cow	17.50
Yearling Colt	30.00
Rows of garden produce; carrots, beets, potatoes, etc., 45 cents per row.	

A railway car of settlers effects was loaded in Whitewood, and on October 4, 1934, with Jim

Graham in charge of looking after cows, horses, etc., they headed north to the Peace River Country.

After settling in Blueberry Mtn., Rod and May once again became active in the community, and as reported in the History of Munro Presbyterian Church, and the Women's Missionary Society Group; were responsible for both. The summer students who served in the church stayed at McDonald's for 2 or 3 years, then at Grahams. The McDonald home was always open to the students and they found Rod and May a tower of strength for spiritual strength and advice in their work; as many times Blueberry was their first field.

May was President of the W.M.S. Auxiliary for a good number of years. Rod was soon ordained an elder and was active in all areas of the church work, until added years prevented his participation.

Rod was a first class horseman, and few could ride the saddle like he. He was always available with his horses, and in later years with his car, to take someone to see the doctor, get repairs, or give needed help in any way.

In 1949 when it was decided to build the church, Rod had a car, so he was general errand boy, getting supplies etc., while Jim Graham, Len Jeffery, and Jack Richards, did most of the logging, sawing of logs, and building of the church. Rod and May were regular attendants at meetings of the church, and many trips were made to Presbytery and Presbyterian through all kinds of weather and roads.

Rod was one of the main ones to push for having the road built east of the Blueberry store and across the creeks. He attended many meetings, and made several trips to Edmonton before it was finally built.

When the R.E.A. was formed, bringing electrical power to the district it was named the McDonald R.E.A. in honor of his contribution towards it.

May passed away of a heart attack at their home in September 1954, and Rod lived alone on the farm and continued to farm until 1963 when he sold the farm to Jim Graham. He then made his home with the Grahams for several years, then spent 4½ months at Pleasantview Lodge in Spirit River before his passing on July 17, 1973. He was laid to rest beside his loving wife in the Blueberry Mtn. Cemetery.

The Walter Mitchell Family — June 1980

I will try to jot down some of my memories of our move from Douglas, Manitoba to Blueberry Mountain, Alberta in March of 1928, as remembered by me, Marjorie Mitchell "Thiessen".

My Father Walter Mitchell and my Uncle George Pring left earlier with a carload of stock implements and household effects. My Mother Myrtle Mitchell, my Aunt Annie Pring, her two children Grace and



First Log House.

Donald, and we three, Myland, Kenneth and I, travelled by train to Edmonton. We experienced a wash out at Kerrobert, and so missed our train in Edmonton. Those days there were only two trains a week.

Dad met us at Spirit River, and the next morning we left early for Blueberry Mtn. The roads were very poor and somewhat muddy so two teams pulled the wagon. Mr. Mason Wood and Dad each supplied a team. We were wrapped up well, and with suit cases, trunks and food for the day we set out on our journey. Mother read us a good story book to pass the time as we travelled to our new home. I remember the log bunk house and other buildings at Cache I, where we stopped to eat and feed our horses. There were pole bunks along one wall, covered with straw, where one placed their bed roll and slept for the night. There was a camp stove to cook on and heat simple meals, and a bare board table along the other wall, also home made benches to sit on. It was certainly a rough appearing abode, but was a very necessary accommodation from the cold of winter, and the long hours spent on the road. I too, remember the railroad wooden bridge spanning the deep coulee at Cache I. There were no guard rails and when a heavy load crossed over it, the bridge swayed back and forth. There is a story told that Dad drove over it with four horses abreast and even hardened pioneers felt it a bit risky. In those years Ksituan Creek was larger and the road wound down one bank and up the other side. A bar to hold the wheel, was placed as a brake to go down in places and other areas the horses had to work to pull us up. We arrived at our destination — Victor Mitchells' homestead around nine P.M. I still re-

member driving across the creek and seeing the large dam, with the log house up on the bank, and thinking how strange the sod on the roof looked. Victor had a real good pot of soup waiting for us; how good it tasted, after the long journey. We were all ready to crawl into bed for the night.

I remember mice were a terrific problem. We got a kitten from Mr. and Mrs. Hanrahan, and it wasn't long till the ladies were finding dead mice on the floor in the morning. We loved that kitten but it had to hide itself from five youngsters who all wanted to handle it. We lived at Vic's Place till the summer of 1932. It is located where the old Roy White place was, and is now Jimmie Lindsay's home. We then moved to my father's land two miles west, which is Myland's home now.

There was no school, and money being scarce, the Government decided to use the Community Hall, a log building 40'x40' for the school. It could not be winterized so we only had a summer school. Miss Jean Walker, a university student was our first teacher, and she became Mrs. Victor Mitchell. I believe school began the summer of 1929. I can't remember the exact number of students but it was around thirty. We rode horseback approximately four miles. Our horse "Daisy" quite frequently shied at a shadow, and so, often we found ourselves sitting on the ground. Myland and I would pick ourselves up and proceed to walk the rest of the way, as Daisy would run home without her passengers. Later we travelled by buggy and horse.

Our closest neighbors were R. Hoggarth and family. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Meester. The Hoggarths and Frank Tyler were there when we came, but the Meesters came shortly after. She was a young bride who had never seen a pioneering area, but was willing to learn. Mrs. Tyler and Mary came shortly after our arrival. Cobie Meester and my sister Shirley, were born in Spirit River February 18, 19 respectively, Dr. Reavley being the busy man who helped them into the world.

In those early years most of my father's brothers came with several others to look over the area. Most of them decided to stay where they were, but Isaac Mitchell's boys (cousins) Stanley, Fred, Irvine and Lloyd came and settled south of Spirit River. My Uncles, Stuart, Norman and Birkett bought land at Northmark. My Uncle Ernie bought land, which later became Mr. and Mrs. Jim Graham's home.

Uncle George Pring and Dad had a saw mill in the green timber near Whitburn for one year, then it was moved to the Bridgeview area where Uncle George sawed lumber during the 1930's. There was very little money, so the barter system was used, and many were helped through the difficult years.



W. Mitchell Family.

During those early days berry picking down in the creeks proved interesting and worthwhile, providing us with fruit we could not buy. Most often all went and made a picnic day to be enjoyed as well as being profitable. On such a day we were frightened by the howling of what we thought was a timber wolf. That day it was only Mother and Aunt Annie, and we youngster's and our dog crouched at Mother's feet in terror. We were soon gathered together and pulled ourselves up the roughest part of the bank, all a little frightened, but relieved to get out of the creek.

My Father was a mixed farmer, usually having a large herd of cattle, pigs, sheep, poultry, even tried his hand at keeping bees. He farmed in Blueberry Mountain from 1929 to 1960, when he retired to "The Pleasant View Lodge" in Spirit River, Alberta. They made several trips in the latter year's, one to California to see us. They both had worked hard during the long year's of building up their home and equipping the farm for the family. Now they were contented to rest in retirement. My Father passed away December 31st, 1969 at the age of 82 and a half years. My Mother still resides at Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River, at the good old age of 90½ Years.

Our first Ministers were United Church Students who came during the summer and had services in the hall. Mr. Atkinson was the first Presbyterian Minister to come periodically from Wanham, Alberta. My Mother had a Sunday School at the Hall for several years, and later the classes were held from home to home, on the east side of the district.

I was privileged to complete my schooling in



W. W. Mitchell House built in 1932.

Spirit River, and later took Nurses training at Lethbridge, Alberta. After graduation, I nursed for several years in different hospitals, then I went into District Nursing. I was placed at Blueberry Mtn., Smith, Kinuso, Alta.

In 1958, I went to California and married Isaac Thiessen. We lived in El Monte, California from 1958 to August of 1964. We returned home to Canada, and have lived since in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Marjorie Thiessen

The Mitchell Family written by Shirley Mitchell "Miller"

Being the youngest of the Mitchell family, I do not remember the early days in Blueberry Mtn., and I vaguely remember moving to the home place where Myland resides now. I took nearly all of my schooling in the new school at Blueberry Mtn., tho' I may have gone to the old hall for a few months, while the new school was being built. My first teacher was Miss Boadway. Marjorie was attending High School in Spirit River, and Myland was Dad's right-hand man on the farm, so that left Kenneth and I to attend



Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Mitchell.

school. Kenneth and I rode horseback to school most of the time, or we rode in the buggy, and used the cutter in the winter time. How I remember those cold crisp mornings. Kenneth would get up early and milk cows before school. I was the youngest, so my jobs came a little later on. I remember Kenneth and I had the job of filling the wood box every night. The big airtight heater sitting in our living room certainly could eat up the wood.

I remember Myland coming from the bush, with great big loads of logs, and making piles to be sawed up for firewood. It was a real fun day when the neighbors would come to saw the wood. One time it would be Unk. Cramer with his wood saw, and the crew would be Shorty Collins, Herby Keebler, Frank Juzwishin. Several men would get hold of the log and carry it up to the saw, then another would be there to push it into the saw to cut the block. Another man would catch the block and throw it into a pile, and so on till one had a big pile of wood. Mother would be rushing around in the house getting the dinner ready or preparing afternoon lunch. What a time of socializing took place! Now things are so different — everyone goes their own way and has their own little group of friends. Now you may not see your neighbor from one month to the next.

I remember another time in the winter when the men were getting up ice. In those days, we had big dugouts or dams, from which we got our water, and by the way, they were dug with horses and a slip; a big cast or iron container that would dig into the ground as the horses pulled it through. It took many a day and lots of horses and manpower to dig our dam at home. Anyway, that winter the men were sawing ice in blocks and hauling it out of the water with ice tongs. It was then put on their sleighs and hauled to their homes for drinking water. They usually had a log building with sawdust in it, and covered each layer of ice, to keep it through the summer months. This one time I remember, Billy Lindsay was cutting ice, and the block broke off or the saw slipped, and in he went to a cold bath. The men grabbed him and pulled him out, but before he got to the house, his clothes were frozen all around him. Everyone had a good laugh, and so did Bill after he was in warm dry clothing. On these days the neighbor's children would also come to play. I would get out my dolls and we would play house. I remember Wanda Lindsay coming with her dad, to visit or to stay overnight, and we would have a great time. I had a doll cradle made out of an orange box, or a homemade sleigh that we pulled each other around on. Kenneth had a great time — he made harness for our two dogs then we would hook them up, jump on the sleigh, and away we would go dashing down the road. Kenneth had a

small trap line on our farm. He would catch weasels and squirrels, and I believe Mr. McCormich would buy them at the store.

Our closest neighbors were the Andy Ellison Family. There were five boys and two girls in the family. Hughie and Norman were the oldest, and they were my playmates in those early years. We lived only a quarter of a mile apart. I remember going over there to play, and they always had a turkey gobbler that would put me on the run every time. I was scared stiff of the thing!! Mrs. Ellison always had maple buds which I couldn't resist. They also had Shetland ponies that we loved to ride. Incidentally you didn't bend over in front of them, or "boy" you got a good nip. "You know where??" They had a little Shetland Stallion called "Toni". He ran away one night, and came over to our place. He would get in with the big horses when they were feeding and get in under their stomach, then up with his hind feet and give them a good belt. This night I caught him, put a bridle on him and rode him. He bucked, and stood up on his hind legs, trying his best to bite my legs. I put on a real cowboy show for the folks that night. I loved horses, loved to ride, and loved to go for the cows to bring them home for milking. I did my share of the chores when Kenneth was away; milked the cows, fed the pigs, looked after the horses.

One winter Dad worked in Dan Galbraith's mill, so just Mother and I were at home that winter. Dad would come home on weekends. In the meantime I looked after the chores.

I think back on those early days when Dad and Myland worked so hard brushing and breaking the land. Dad had 19 head of horses at one time. He loved those big Clydesdale horses, with their big white feet, and their white faces. I remember Myland standing on the breaking plow with eight horses hooked up. You can imagine driving eight horses, if you ran into a hornets' nest.

Through the years we had many hired men, to help cut brush with an axe, or to help fence, or stook, or do carpenter work. In those days you were lucky if you earned a dollar a day. Some of the hired men were: Jack Lilac and Mr. Hucul who built our house and barn. Henry Markovich, John Kozij, Tom Mollinga, Chet Reeves, Ray Waughtel, Toni Witishyn, John Doetzel, Bill Waknuk built cupboards for mother, and Ernie Dunham did a lot of carpenter work for us. Earnest Sagert, a young Free Methodist Minister also worked for us on many different jobs. He ended up marrying the school teacher, Miss Martin, who boarded at our place. In the early years many of the neighbors traded work, such as helping with the haying or stacking of sheaves. Some of the neighbors were: Gilligans, Reeves, Roy White, Frank Tyler,

Jack Richards, Tom Lindsay, Jim Grover, Cecil Lalonde, and Bob Hewitt.

Each spring there was the preparation of the land for crop: the plowing, the cultivating, the harrowing — walking up and down the field after the horses with the dust flying in your eyes and in your teeth. In the fall came threshing time. First the grain was cut with the horse drawn binder, then stooked. This was the time when hired men were needed. There were several threshing outfits in the district. Unk Cramer, Jack Campbell, Shorty Collins, and Roy White each had an outfit. The men had their teams and racks to load the sheaves in the field, and there were usually two field pitchers, to help load the racks. There was the owner of the outfit who set the machine for threshing, and he looked after the tractor. The farmer whose place you were on, also helped to get the machine in the right place for the granary and the straw pile.

The women preparing the food for lunches and meals had to be up very early, and work late at night. What a satisfaction when the grain was all in the granary, but what a hardship it was if it rained for days or we had a snowstorm — then all work must stop. The threshers would travel from farm to farm, and each outfit pulled their own caboose for the men to sleep in. After a hard day's work, this was a time that the men enjoyed. They lay on their bed roll and laughed and joked with their fellow workers.

I look back on my childhood and savour every minute. Certainly our parents worked hard for their accomplishments, but the whole family took part and all worked together, and just enjoyed life and being together. I remember coming home with the mail on Friday night — how the whole family would gather round the table, and each would take part of the Free Press — one the funny papers, one the continued story, one would read the ads. in the back, or the news in the front. You might be curled up in the corner, on the old homemade couch, munching a good crisp apple, bought at McCormick's store 2½ miles away. The wood stove would be crackling, throwing out the heat, and the tea kettle boiling merrily away.

Then there were the community gatherings; the picnics, the ball games, the dances, with people coming all distances — from Blueberry Creek, Ksituan, Spirit River, Gordondale, and Yellow Creek. The orchestra in those days may have only received one dollar apiece for a night's playing. Tommy Lindsay played the violin, Mrs. Bernard played the piano, or Mrs. Dan Galbraith chorded on the piano. Graeme Thomlinson played the piano and the guitar, and also sang. I remember Billy Lindsay singing "The Little Shirt My Mother Made For Me". The

Jamison Brothers, Bill Solomiany, Roman Yanishewski, and several others played in different orchestras. In those days the whole family turned out for the entertainment. When it got too late for the small children, they went to sleep in the homemade bunks in one corner of the hall.

On these occasions, the ladies of the community would all make a cake or sandwiches, the coffee would be made in a copper boiler sitting on the old barrel stove. At lunch time each young man would take his partner for the supper waltz, then take a seat along the wall. The men would come along with a big box of cups, another would bring the coffee, and the ladies passed the cake and sandwiches. A great time was had by all.

In the early 1930's a great deal of visiting was done from home to home. I remember Mother playing the piano, and several people there having a good old sing song. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Woods, Mr. and Mrs. Lomas, Charlie Cousins, Harry Hanrahan, Mrs. Meester, Jim Graham and the Esselink Brothers.

Sunday was a very busy day. We went to Sunday School either at the hall or at the neighbors, or at our place. I can remember the Esselinks coming, Agnes and Dick Bernard, Mrs. Bernard, Mrs. Tyler and Mary and Ruby, the Meester family, Tom and Mein Mollings and the Pegg family came in later years. I remember walking over to Peggs many a Sunday afternoon, taking a short cut through the fields; that way it was about a mile and a half. It's funny how things work out — Vern Pegg and his family lived just across the Park from where I live now. We were all saddened by the death of Vern, who was a friend of my childhood, and also a friend and neighbor in adulthood.

Now I must not leave "Mother" out of this story. Mother is now 90 years old, and I think back on those very early years — how she managed her work, and the big heavy washing that had to be done. The boiling of the water on the stove for washing, the big heavy woolen winter underwear, the heavy work shirts that had to be washed, and the ironing of cotton shirts and dresses. Bread had to be baked which was mixed in the evening, all wrapped up overnight, and finished in the morning. How good that bread tasted when we came home from school. Mother also made butter and sold it at the store, or to the neighbors. We also raised little chicks; I remember our red incubator and how the eggs would hatch. We kept chickens and sold eggs, killed the chickens and canned them for several people in Spirit River. I remember J. K. Smith was one she sold to. All these things helped to buy the groceries. Mother also made most of our clothes; things that were bought came from the Eaton Cata-

logue. How we looked forward to mail day which was once a week on Friday, and when the Eaton parcel would come we would get some brand new clothes.

Mother rode horseback in the early days and she would go for the mail. The wolves and the coyotes were more plentiful in those days, and one time coming home from the post office, she encountered a wolf not far from her path. The horse quivered beneath her, but she just kept going steadily on, and the wolf never bothered her, nevertheless she was glad to get home safe and sound.

Mother and Dad were always hospitable to people, and many a time people came and stayed all night, or dropped in for a meal. Many of the teachers boarded at our place, such as Miss Wilson, Miss Shiek, Miss Martin, Miss Dorothy Lilge. The first ministers that came to Blueberry Mtn. were the Anglicans, Mission Van Ladies, old Mr. Hamilton who taught the Rutherford message, United Church Student Ministers. One young man's name was Mr. Davis and he stayed at our place. The first Presbyterian Minister was Mr. Atkinson, who stayed at our place and held service at the hall, perhaps once a month. He travelled from Wanham by buggy, and cutter in the winter time. When he retired Dad bought his little horse "Trixie", and the buggy and cutter. This was one of the horses Kenneth and I rode to school. All this made a lot of work for mother, but she loved people, and loved having them around.

I remember one time after the Nurses were stationed in Blueberry, a Dental Clinic was set up at our place. The nurse at that time was Miss Swan. A big tent was set up in the yard for the people to wait in, and the Dentist's office was our living room. The people came from far and wide, people came from Blueberry Creek and even Gordondale. Some of those poor people had several teeth pulled, then they had to joggle home in a wagon for miles and miles. This is pioneer life — how our country was made — how courageous our parents were.

I took my High School in Spirit River, Alta. The last year I was there was 1947, then I spent 4 months in West Summerland, in Mrs. Milne's cannery. I then worked for one year in Woodward's store in Vancouver, then decided to go home, as I didn't like the big city. I helped mother for one year, then the following winter I decided to attend Bible School at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, returning home in the spring. The next opportunity that came my way, was attending a Commercial Course in Dawson Creek, B.C. While attending the College, I met the man of my life, "Mr. Gordon Miller", and I decided the business world wasn't for me. We were married September 5, 1953, and have two children — Mar-

garet 25 years old, and Donald 22. My husband works for the B.C. government and we reside in Dawson Creek, B.C.

History of Myland Mitchell

My great-grandfather, William Mitchell married Catherine Higgins in the year 1837, and came to Canada by sailboat in 1840. They made their home at Lascelles, Quebec, and had a family of nine.

My maternal great-great-grandfather, James Rogers and Issabella McMickle were born at An-throne, Ireland. They came to Canada in March, 1845 and settled at North Wakefield, Quebec in 1852. My great-grandfather, David Rogers married Elizabeth Rogers on March 17, 1886. They raised ten children, and celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on March 17, 1936.

My father, William Walter Mitchell was born at Wolseley, Saskatchewan in 1887. He later farmed at Douglas, Manitoba where he married Myrtle Andrews on November 17, 1915, and lived on the North West quarter of 27-11-17. I was born at Douglas, Manitoba on May 26, 1917, and after having the misfortune of breaking my arm at Douglas at the age of nine, I went to Winnipeg for treatments and stayed until December.

Due to the rust damage in the crops, father decided to try his luck elsewhere, and moved to the Peace River country, coming to the Vic Mitchell place, two miles east of our present home site. Vic, a cousin of Dad's was a forest ranger at that time. Dad went ahead of the rest of the family, with horses and machinery, travelling by freight in March.

In April, (after the fair in Brandon, in which I had the first prize shorthorn calf), Mother, Marjorie, Ken and I, along with mother's sister Mrs. Anne Pring and her two children, left Brandon by train. My recollection of the trip was the washout at Kerrobert, Saskatchewan, where we were transferred to another train in the middle of the night. I recall the old wicker seats and the coal oil lamps. The train going north from Edmonton only went twice a week, and because of the washout we missed it. Upon arrival at Spirit River, we had to purchase groceries and supplies to do us for that summer, because the roads were impassable most of the time. We left for Blueberry Mountain on the frost, with a wagon and four horses. We reached the building site just before sunset, and seeing the sod roof, we were told that this was our home. Mother and us children stayed in town for the winter, where the youngest member of the family (Shirley) was born on the 19th of February 1929. When aroused in the middle of the night to go and call Dr. Reavley, the only question apt to come from a young boy was whether this couldn't wait until morning.

No doubt the history of our past would remain incomplete if we failed to mention something about our school days. The first and only school located in the Blueberry area was situated up on the hill, and the main means of transportation was horseback. Quite often the three and a half miles of travel were rudely interrupted when Daisy would shy and unload all of us, making it necessary to walk the rest of the way. Because there were no roads at the time, we had as many as seven gates to open and close on the one trip. Mary Tyler would ride with us, and Lorraine and Hilda Penny, our neighbors to the south, rode their own horses. We always admired the youngsters east of us like Bill Konaschuk, Art Phillipchuk, and Bill and Anita Skoworodko who had to travel twice as far



Vic Mitchell on Horseback.



Myland Mitchell Family.

as we had to. They would stop and play with old tires in our yard then continue home to the work that was waiting to be done.

The good old thrashing days were highlighted by some characters who were unaware of the rules of the day. Each man had his own bed roll and slept wherever it was comfortable. The Duke of Doughnuts, as he was known, when ready for bed, went and got his toothbrush and to his surprise followed the rest of the men out to the straw stack.

After living on NW-20-80-7 for four years, we moved to the present site of SW-24-80-8, where building commenced in the summer of 1932. The barn was built by Nick Kosowan and Ken Symchuk. Mr. Mike Hucul was the main carpenter that built the house. Times began to improve, and home and community life had its compensations. In the early forties the horses were replaced by tractors, the thrashing machines by combines, and the thirty-two volt light plant by electric power in the fifties.

Our entertainment, so unlike today with television viewing; consisted of reading, hunting, playing baseball, or gathering around the piano for a good old fashioned singsong.

On January 4, 1958, I married Margaret Peters in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Her grandparents had come to Canada in 1874 and settled at Steinbach in Manitoba, south of Winnipeg, before moving to Saskatchewan in 1897.

We have three children, Gail Maxine, born February 7, 1960. Gail completed highschool in Spirit River then took a year in secretarial sciences in Grande Prairie Regional College. Since then she has been employed with the Spirit River School Division as a secretary. Betty-Ann was born June 12, 1962; graduated in the spring of 1980, and is employed at Moonshine lake Provincial Park as clerk typist. Gary, born January 10, 1966, is in senior high attending the Spirit River Secondary High School.

James Joseph Paish

Jim came into the Ksituan district in 1932 at the age of 17 from Delph, Alta. His brother Pete had preceeded him a few years before. Jim being young and adventurous, decided to come and stay with him. It wasn't long before he was old enough to go home-steading on his own, so Jim took up SE¼, sec. 6, T. 79, R. 7. After proving this up, it was held to Mr. Buchmier. Jim then bought a quarter from Vic Mitchell, the N.W.¼ 18, T. 80, R. 7. where he lived for a few years, before joining the army in 1942.

After returning from the army, Jim married Dorothy Reeve, in 1946. About 1949 they bought the "Penny" place and moved there, where the Paish's farmed until their retirement in 1978, and moved to Spirit River. The farm was sold to the Caryk brothers.

Jim and Dorothy raised a family of two, Judy and Ken. Judy is married to Al Eidse and has two children, they live in Spirit River not far from the grandparents. Ken passed away in 1973.

Jim spent his leisure hours fishing and hunting, reading and playing in his little shop.



Jim Paish with bear.



W. Mitchell Home, 1963.



Navigating a Flooded Road.

Some of his neighbours were Paul Hrychan, the Jamison brothers, Walter, Sidney and Albert. This group with Jim supplied the music for the dances, Jim playing the drums. Another close neighbour was Rochwell Vieschentti, who owned the quarter that Derek Richards bought.

Howard Pegg

1918 brought the end of World War I, and the following year brought Howard Pegg among other veterans to Blueberry Mountain. The east half of Section 14, Township 80, Range 8, West of the 6th Meridian was the land chosen for homesteading and a farm site was established on the south side of the southeast quarter. The first home was immediately east of the creek, and the next home just further east at the top of the knoll. This was a three-room house with engine room, porch, and verandah attached.

Howard Pegg married Sarah Jane Kirkness, daughter of Henry Kirkness, who first lived at Spirit River, but later operated a stopping place at Moose Creek (now Gordondale).



Pegg's Log Home.



H. Pegg Family.

A desire to make the homestead like home in Forestville, Ontario, led to the development of shelterbelts, and by 1939, W. D. Albright of the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm was able to photograph growth well on its way. Being years before power mowers and garden cultivators many hours were spent hoeing and cultivating those places inaccessible to a horse drawn cultivator. Black raspberries, boysenberries, red raspberries, black, red and white currants, gooseberries, sandcherries, strawberries, plum trees, apple trees, rhubarb, horseradish and asparagus were all produced at one time or other. In one special year, muskmellons were grown in the field directly east of the house. Corn was frequently grown and reached maturity, and celery matured at least one year.

Hard work and ambition were necessary to change the homestead into a farm. Besides clearing land, bringing in livestock, freighting grain, etc., there was always time for neighbours and other people, and many early settlers, enjoyed the hospitality at Pegg's place, before and during their endeavours to establish homesteads as well.

Registered animals or good stock were much valued. Major, Brightlight, Jim, Popeye and Coon inhabited the barnyard while a number of registered



H. Pegg and daughter Vera.

Airedales named Whiskers were supposed to be good pets and watchdogs. Many ended up suffering too much from porcupine quills and had to be destroyed. Blootch, Teddy and Nigger may not have had the papers, but had the necessary characteristics to be long living, responsible, dependable farm companions.

In 1938 the position of forest ranger became available and this job was acquired by Howard Pegg and held until his death on January 20, 1949. Rumours would suggest that here was a lenient game warden who realized the necessity of survival in a frontier area.

Seven children were born to Howard and Sarah Jane (Jean) Pegg. None were given second names because Howard supposedly did not have one either. A visit from the Ontario Peggs plus a genealogy prepared for his mother's family following his death, revealed that the name was really Jacob Howard Pegg.

Vera was born November 28/27. After attending school at Blueberry Mountain, she attended high school in Spirit River, then St. Joseph's Business College in Grande Prairie. While working for the Department of Indian Affairs in High Prairie, she met and married Robert Kennedy of Wembley, who had been born at the old townsite of Lake Saskatoon, west of Grande Prairie. Their three children, Patricia, Douglas, and Donald are all married and all reside in the Peace River country.

Richard was born April 11/29. His schooling was also acquired at Blueberry Mountain and Spirit River. Being the oldest son, the death of his father gave him the responsibility of the farm and looking after younger brothers and sisters. He married Shirley Helmer of Hay River, N.W.T., and they now reside in Edmonton with their four children: Randy, Brenda, Kevin, and Karen.

Vern was born October 11/30 and was educated at Blueberry Mountain, Blueberry Creek, and Spirit River. Office work did not appeal to him, and he chose instead to work for Canadian Freightways, much of the time driving transports on the Alaska Highway. He married Doreen Smale of Eckville, Alberta. Failure to recover completely from a heart attack eventually led to his death at his home in Dawson Creek, B.C. on April 2/77. His wife and three children: Brent, Miles and Carmen reside in Dawson Creek.

Melba was born June 30/32. Blueberry Mountain, Blueberry Creek, and Spirit River were locations for her education before attending Notre Dame Business College in Dawson Creek. A year of supervising school at Blueberry Mountain was a job held after Grade 12 and after working in High Prairie.

While working for the forestry in Slave Lake for Mason Wood, she met and married Real Cyr. They and their four children, Ronald, Sharon, Cathy and Leslie reside in Whitecourt and area.

David was born February 15/38. He also attended school at Blueberry Mountain and Spirit River before joining the Airforce. Operating heavy equipment has resulted in his frequent moving to places of construction. He and his wife, Darlene LaFond had two daughters, Denise and Dulcie, who now live in Prince George, and David presently lives in Fort St. John, B.C.

Louise was born January 16/40, and also attended school in Blueberry Mountain and Spirit River before attending the University of Alberta to become a teacher. She married Arnold Schulz of Woking and lived on the farm at Westmark until moving to Spirit River in 1970. She and her husband purchased the farms of Gordon and Dick Jackson in Blueberry in 1976. They and their daughters, Sandra and Charlene, still reside in Spirit River.

Dennis, the youngest, was born July 15/42. He attended school in Blueberry Mountain, Blueberry Creek, Slave Lake, and Spirit River. He apprenticed as a refrigeration mechanic for Midwest Electric in Grande Prairie and later received papers for refrigeration mechanic from SAIT in Calgary. He married Patricia Nelson of Sundre, Alberta, and they and their two children, Dixie and Darin, reside on the farm they bought from Jesse Caterer in Blueberry Mountain.

The original Pegg farm was sold to John Kudeba and Mrs. Pegg moved to Spirit River. She will this year receive the distinction of being a resident of Alberta since it became a province in 1905. She is one of the last remaining original settlers of Blueberry Mountain still residing in the area.

Life on the farm at Blueberry was a good interesting life which was lived without a great deal of money. Moonshine not only beamed down from above, and many a still was found in what were once secluded places. Besides contributing to gay times and sad times, it also caused great excitement when a neighbor visited with a drawer full of 2 quart jars filled with moonshine, all ready for a party.

While Howard Pegg lived, there were some definite rules to maintain. Other than "necessary" work, working on Sunday was discouraged. This was probably due to a strict Baptist upbringing during Howard Pegg's childhood. Unlike the Peggs back in Ontario, dancing was acceptable providing you danced with whoever asked you. Swearing by kids was a "No, No". Elders had to be respected and addressed formally unless they were special, like Grandma Keebler, Grandma Hamilton, and Grandma Tyler.

Kids were to behave, indeed they were to be seen and not heard. Many an hour was spent sitting on a chair either in the corner or out on the verandah. In fact, after an hour out on the verandah late at night with coyotes harmonizing in the background, one's value system was rearranged, and it didn't really matter who got the softest pillow. Giggling at the table was not tolerated, and such behavior resulted in hunger pangs long before breakfast. Individualized attention was effected when it was felt necessary to administer a whipping. Each offender was able to go out and select his/her own red willow.

The family enjoyed the highlight of the summer, the community picnic. Participation in a race netted a free cone, or some would never have enjoyed the ice cream. A bunk in the corner of the hall replaced baby sitters, and one could sleep if dancing was of no interest. In winter we cleaned the snow from the dam to skate. The school concert and Christmas tree were highlights of the winter season as well. Caterers had electric lights very early and invited David, Louise, and Dennis for a Christmas party. Caterers wanted them to guess the colors of the lights before lunch. Dennis and Louise didn't know the color "blue", and David wouldn't say "boo" because his teeth were missing.

A favorite spot on the farm was the very novel two-seater swing, complete with platform, situated amongst the spruce trees. Many visitors especially student ministers, enjoyed a swing in such a lovely environment, even when the little kids were there to be a nuisance. Close by was the attraction for the little kids, a playhouse on stilts.



Dennis Pegg Family.

School and the journey there and back were surely character building. With a once weekly bath responsible for major cleanliness, and the clean set of clothes that had to last a week, off we trudged to school wearing sensible clothes like peach or denim bloomers, thoroughly wrinkled long stockings, wool or blue striped fleece lined underwear, the snowsuit that was bought and donned in fall and had to last until spring without washing, sensible pants and blouses in sufficient quantity to suit the weather. One learned to smoke, swear, play ball, eat wild onions from Howard's Hill, defend oneself away from the watchful eye of adults, and recognize the footprints of those ahead of you on the muddy road.

A tragedy occurred when Richard lost sight of one eye in a combine accident. That was the most serious of all ailments and accidents. Some funny things happened too. Vern, in his nervousness in asking a district nurse to a dance, overtwirled his cap and it went skittering across the floor. Melba committed the unforgiveable sin of giggling when the minister was saying "grace".

Louise was nicknamed Peter for years following David's early hair-cutting expertise at the age of 4, which resulted in the finished product being a genuine boy's haircut when Dad attempted to repair the damages. Vera was nicknamed Granny for always walking around at an early age with her hands behind her back. David found that spoons were adequate fasteners where buttons had failed.

The farm today is part of a large modern farm. Snake Hill and the Figure Six are meaningless phrases and places today. Many of the shelterbelts are gone. Favorite haunts have been obliterated. All that remains is a memory of the way it used to be, an epitome of the early days in Blueberry Mountain.

Philipchuk

April 1929, Nick, Katarina and their children Arthur 8, Paul 6, Jean 4, and Alexandra 2, from Mieley, Poland set foot on Canadian soil at Halifax. They had sailed from Danzig on the S.S. Fredrick VIII. They travelled by train to Smoky Lake, Alberta, where Bill Starchuk had offered them work and a house for a year.

Nick took a homestead in Grassland, broke a few acres and built a cabin. When he went back to Smoky Lake to get his family, Mr. Starchuk and other farmers advised him to go to the Peace River District instead, where there was better soil and better growing conditions. In the spring of 1930 he filed on the southeast quarter of 20-80-7 at the Edmonton Land Titles Office.

He returned to Smoky Lake for his family which now included baby Helen. The family stayed at the

home of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Gill, two miles from the homestead, for a few weeks until a cabin was built.

Mr. Testowich, a farmer with one wooden leg, broke the first acre of land with a walking plough.

In 1932, Katarina was rushed to the Fairview Hospital in Herb Keebler's car, but she died, leaving Nick to be both father and mother to the five children. For many years he worked for Walter Mitchell. He got up very early in the morning to bake bread, cook, mend, and do whatever homework had to be done and still get to Mitchell's at seven o'clock.

In 1942 Paul lost his life in the Dawson Creek dynamite explosion.

In 1956 Helen died in McCleary, Washington.

In 1952 Nick married a widow, Palagia Skopiuk. She passed away in 1968. Shortly after this Nick moved into Pleasant View Home, where he enjoyed living until November 1976 when the chapter closed for a homesteader and a great father.

Chester Reeves and Family

by Helen (Reeves) Morrison

Chester Reeves was born in Missouri to a large family. He left home at the young age of 13 and worked his way up to Calgary, where he married Alberta Levine who was born in North Dakota and went to Redland near Calgary to visit her grandmother.

Chester then worked in the Nace Mine for several years, then tried renting a farm near Drumheller. After two crop failures he heard of a neighbor coming to the Peace River Country, so the Reeves family decided to come north as well. Chester, his son Roy and the neighbor's son rode in the boxcar with the cattle, horses and machinery, while the rest of the family, Mary, Irene, Dorothy, Helen and Mother came by car. We left the town of Morrin on April 23, 1930 and arrived at the Steve Keay farm at Blueberry Mountain on May 7, 1930. We came as far as High Prairie by car, and the bridge across the Smoky River was out, so we came the rest of the way by train. From Spirit River we travelled by team and wagon — the kids up on top of furniture and bed springs on the wagon. The whole load was almost lost when we crossed the Ksituan on a floating bridge. We did lose a colt that was travelling too close to its mother.

We stayed on the Steve Keay place until fall. Dad worked at any job he could get. In the fall of '30 we moved to the Mildrum place (the present store site). In 1932 we moved to the homestead, three miles east and a mile north of the present hall site (another trip on top of the wagon load of household effects, but not so scary). We lived in a tent that summer while some neighbors helped build a log house. It wasn't quite finished by winter, so our neighbor to the north, Roy

White was kind enough to let us stay in his house for the winter and we moved into the log house the next summer.

Roy White had the only radio for a few years, so on Saturday nights in the wintertime, close neighbors would gather at his place to hear Amos and Andy, and The Carter Family.

School at Blueberry Mountain was held in the old log hall, which sat on the side of the road on the top of the hill $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile north of the hamlet. Miss Walker (Mrs. Vic Mitchell) was the first teacher there. She was followed by Miss Wilson, who came to the district to teach at Blueberry Creek School in 1933, but that school wasn't ready so she taught at Blueberry Mtn. In 1935 there was an unfortunate accident at the school when Bud Howard and Jerry Hanrahan drowned. We used to play on the top of Blueberry Mountain at noon hour. When the school bell rang, the two boys ran across the dam and the ice broke. Marjorie Mitchell won a medal for helping to get them out.

Shortly after that a new hall was built, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile north of the old site (where Rod and Dorothy Graham now live). The old hall was moved there and used for a barn, and is still standing. A new school — Blueberry Mountain School, was also built at the bottom of the hill and it is still standing, tho' it hasn't been used as a school for many years.

The first school in Blueberry Creek was opened in 1934 and the first teacher was Charlie Knight. He taught for three years then Bill Proctor took over. Mr. Knight had 63 children in the one-room school, and only eight could speak English, John Hawrylenko and John Fix were the interpreters for about two weeks. Two one-room log buildings burned down in the first five years. The first time we held school in the Willis house (the land now owned by Grahams). The second time school was held in Yablonski's, across from the school — with cats on the table, chickens in bunks, and bedbugs on the ceiling and walls. Mr. Hemphill was the teacher. It didn't take long to erect a two-roomed frame building which was still in use for second generation children, then the new school was built in 1955. We walked $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to school, and when the weather got too cold -35°F to -40°F, the fathers took turns driving us. Later years we walked one mile, then rode with Buchmeiers in a covered cutter with a wood stove.

The hamlet of Blueberry Mountain was on a cross roads with a store, a blacksmith shop, a garage, and the nurse's home each on separate corners. Nick Badiuk built the first store in Blueberry and this was the site for the store till 1979. The hall was moved there from the old site in '48 or '49 and located beside the garage. Mr. McCormick bought the store from

Nick in the early '30's and ran it till he sold out to Mr. McCluskie in 1945, who sold out to Jack Bird in 1947.

Mrs. Penny, a Blueberry resident, had had some nurse's training and helped out when needed at confinement cases. Dr. Reavley was the doctor in Spirit River and made the trip to Blueberry on horseback when needed. Miss Leppington was our first qualified nurse in 1933 or '34, and lived in the Nurse's Home — a house that was moved onto Jesse Caterer's land across from the store. Dave Bozarth moved up from Sexsmith and ran a blacksmith shop — a busy gathering place where plowshares were sharpened and horses shod, and many stories exchanged.

Chester Reeves acted as veterinarian, doctoring all animals. He only cleared and broke 35 acres on the homestead as he was too busy working out. Mrs. Reeves helped by selling butter and eggs to the store, and cooking for threshers. There also used to be wood sawing crews in the winter. Two or three neighbors would get together and cut ice for their drinking water supply. These ice blocks were packed in sawdust in ice houses, for the year's water supply.

Sunday School was held at a different home every week, with Mrs. Bernard and Mrs. Walter Mitchell teaching. The three highlights of the season for children were the annual picnic, with free homemade ice cream, hot dogs at 5¢, and balloons. We used to go to the picnic with 5¢ or 10¢, run races, and come home with 35¢ or 50¢ (our spending money till berry picking time, when we'd pick two water pails a day and walk 5 or 6 miles, and get 5¢ a pail for them).

Then there was the Halloween party at the hall. Mrs. Bernard would make the costumes, and Tom Gillespie always took an active part. He also helped with Christmas games and other things as they took place. At the Christmas Concert somebody from each family took part in the program and there was always a toy and a candy bag for each child. Three or four families would go in one sleigh, with straw, blankets, and flat irons to keep us warm.

Most of the women of the community made their own lye soap. Our cough medicine or spring tonic was made from sugar beets, molasses and ginger. Salve was made from Balm of Gilead (Black Poplar) buds, and was used for cuts, scrapes, and cows udders. Pitch from spruce trees was chewed for gum if you could stand the taste.

The Rawleigh man, Mr. Meen from Sexsmith, used to come twice a year. He always had a stick of Wrigleys spearmint gum for each child. A travelling clinic with 2 doctors and 3 nurses set up in the hall for about a week. Parents brought their children from miles around. They went one day for an examination,



L. Morrison Family in the '60's.

and if tonsils had to be removed they went back next day with their bed and pyjamas. From the operating table they were put to bed and watched over until they came out of the ether, then they went home and lived on milk and jello for a week.

Grandpa Levine had a stroke at the age of 85, which left him paralyzed from the waist down. He was taken care of at home by Mrs. Reeves and Helen for 3 years until he passed away.

In 1948 Len Morrison came to Blueberry to work for Mrs. Albue. In 1951 he and Helen Reeves were married. Len worked for Jack Bird for 15 years driving a truck and operating the Back Hoe. Len had his first farm in 1953 — the Ray Waughtel homestead. The Morrisons raised four boys:

Chester, who has the C. & D. Bodyshop in Rycroft.

Randy, who has his own farm and also works for Amico.

Pat, who is with P.M. Construction — working from home.

Brad, who is still in school.

Chester married Diane McLachlan and they have two children: (Dwight and Crystal).

Randy married Marlene Smith and they also have two children: (Cory and Shannon).



Morrison Family, 1980.

The Jack Richards Family by Marianne (Cramer) Richards

My mother was of Welsh origin, and dad was of German origin. In March 1927, brother John Cramer and Uncle John Cramer (known as "Unk" to everyone) came to the Peace River country looking for homesteads, and filed on land at Whitburn. In the fall of 1928, Mother, Dad, Evelyn, Russell, Frank, Marianne, and Robert, moved onto the homestead. As the three boys were old enough to homestead, the folks were hoping to have the family around them. Dad, known as Charlie Cramer, and Russell were the ones to prove up on their homesteads. John and Russell worked with surveyors while surveying Whitburn and Rose Prairie in 1929-1930.



Jack on horseback.

From the homestead, a trip to town (Spirit River) took two days. Roads were full of holes and corduroy logs were laid over the mud holes. Mother was a midwife, so had calls at all times of the day or night. Some of the patients were taken into our home, as doctors were in Spirit River and there was no hospital.

I, Marianne Cramer, was born at Carberry, Manitoba in 1917 and moved to the Peace River area with the family in 1928. I met John Richards who was of Welsh origin, in the summer of 1932, and we were married December 19th, 1939. We lived three miles west of Blueberry Mtn. from 1939 to 1947, on the George Milldrum farm, then we bought land from Matt. Solomiany in east Blueberry and farmed there till 1966.

Jack and his partner Campbell Reynolds broke many acres of land with 8 horses and a breaking plow. While in Blueberry, Jack was on the School Board, helped build the Blueberry Mtn. Hall, and helped cut and haul logs for the Munro Church. Ours was the first wedding dance held in the Hall.

I was leader of the 4-H Garden Club at Blueberry from 1956 to 1966; just girls at that time. Many girls won trips to Olds, Vermilion and Fairview, and one girl won a scholarship. I attended three Leader's Courses at Olds. Looking back now, it was and is a rewarding time.

A few of the Blueberry highlights I remember are — having so much fun putting on a play (all woman cast) "O, the darn Collar Button". Getting together for the annual picnic, and making homemade ice cream, etc. The many good times we had when the young people got together with Mr. and Mrs. Caterer as chaperones. We called ourselves the "Do-Dads", put on masquerade dances, and had so much fun getting ready. Problems I remember too were — once when Jack was away a cow slipped into the water hole in winter and I had to hitch a horse onto the cow to pull her out. Another time we had to get Leah to



Cramer Family.

hospital in 1951 when the trip took all day and the temperature was 60° below.

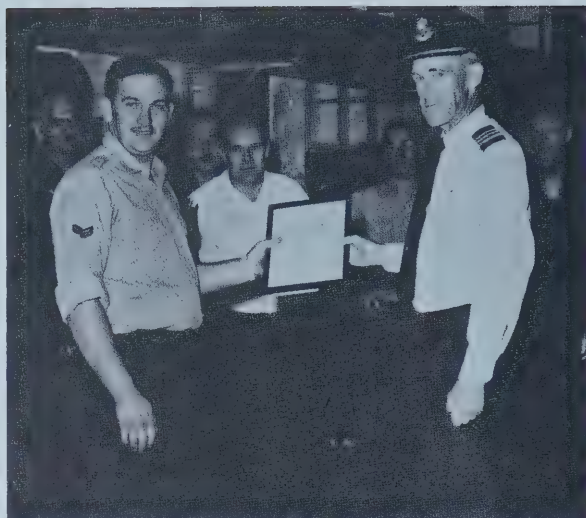
Our first daughter was born in 1941 and we named her Leah Ruth. She took her schooling at Blueberry Creek and Spirit River. She also attended Naramata, a United Church Bible School in British Columbia, returning to finish school at Spirit River while working to support herself. Leah married Robert Mirchell from Stonehouse, Scotland in 1965, and a year later moved to London, Ontario where Robert took up dentistry. He worked in Allison, Ontario for a year, and now they have a Clinic in Grand Valley, Ontario. He spends his spare time as a research author, and both participate in community affairs. They have one son Robert Scott, born in 1969.



The Graham and Richard kids.

Our second daughter Harriet Irene was born in 1942 and was also raised and took her schooling at Blueberry Creek and Spirit River. After completing her education Harriet married Julian Boivin in 1961 and they reside in Spirit River. Julian works for the town of Spirit River, and Harriet is the secretary of the Separate School there. Their children Marie Jean, born in 1962, Richard Andrew born in 1964, and Douglas John born in 1966 are being raised in Spirit River.

A third daughter, Gwendolyn Ethel was born to us in 1947, took her schooling in Blueberry Creek and Spirit River, then took a Nursing Aide course. She worked in the Grande Prairie hospital, where she met Russel Kopechy who worked in Grande Cache. They were married in 1970 and later moved to Reniver, Manitoba — Russell's home town. They have a farm at Reniver and Gwen has been employed at the Swan Valley Hospital for the past twelve years. They have one daughter, Jeanette Gwendolyn, born in 1970, and one son Kimeth Anthony Johnathon born in 1979.



LCpl E.A. Bernard presenting a Suggestion Award Certificate to Cpl C.C. Richards. In addition, Cpl Richards received \$50.00 for his suggestion regarding a circuit breaker panel cover on the Tutor aircraft.

Our only son Charles Clifford, named after both grandfathers, Charlie Cramer, and Charlie Richards, was born in 1951. After leaving school he worked at a dairy in Radisson, Saskatchewan for a short time. In 1968 he joined the R.C.A.F. and took his training in Nova Scotia. His first posting was to Borden, Ontario, then he was moved to Moose Jaw, Sask. While in the Forces there he was awarded a certificate for his suggestion for a circuit breaker panel cover on the Tutor aircraft. He met his wife Barbra Breltz there and they were married in 1970. They have three children: Tammy Lynn born in 1971, Samantha Lynn born in 1973, and Robin Lee born in 1974. After requesting a discharge Charlie moved his family to Olds, Alberta, then to Red Deer, where he now works for an oil company.



Richards Family.

In 1966 we sold the farm at Blueberry Mtn., and moved to Semans, Saskatchewan where Jack worked for a big pig farmer. He later had an accident and as a result, lost his eyesight. Now, at the age of 77 Jack resides in Briercrest Nursing Home in Camrose, Alta. I make my home in an apartment of Manitou Manor in Killam, Alta. I am active in the Senior Citizens' organization, being Membership Chairman and Card Party Co-ordinator. I have hobbies, babysit, and chauffeur others from the Manor, all of which makes time pass quickly. I drive my own car and visit my family, also travel quite a bit. My health is good and I enjoy life to the fullest.

The Allan Smiths

In May of 1951 Allan and Elma Smith came to the Blueberry Mountain district. After having scouted the area, they filed on a homestead in the Fourth Creek district. In August of that year they sold their orchard in Vernon, B.C., and moved with five daughters, leaving the four oldest of their family in B.C., as they were on their own. The homestead turned out to be unsuitable, so as the Reg. Caterer farm, 2 miles north of the Blueberry Mountain store was for sale, the decision was made to buy it. The family spent the first year living in the Collins home until they were able to build their own house.

Allan was interested in the affairs of the community. With a group of other interested men, he worked to have the mail service expanded to twice a week. He also was very interested in having electricity brought into the district, because the family had several electrical appliances which they had brought from Vernon and were unable to use. He initiated a petition for the power. The Smiths were also a part of a "fence" telephone system which



Smith Reunion July 1961.

served by Roy Collins, Dick Jackson, Gordon Jackson, Mac McCullough, and Jim Lomas.

They continued with their farming operation until August 1957, when they moved to Pasadena, California. They sold the farm to Len Morrison, and the house which they had built on the farm was sold separately and moved into Spirit River.

After spending 5 years in California they returned to B.C., and retired to Peachland in 1962. Allan and Elma are continuing to enjoy an active retirement, and are looking forward to their 60th wedding anniversary in the summer of 1981.

Of the five girls, Pat married Roy Collins in 1952. They were the first couple to be married in the Blueberry Mountain Presbyterian Church. While they were in Blueberry they had four sons, Ron, Brian, Doug, and Jim. The family moved to Australia in the early 1960's, however Pat and the two youngest boys, Doug and Jim have returned to Canada, and are presently living in Vancouver, B.C.

Muriel married Gordon Jackson, who was a Blueberry Mountain farmer. They had three children, 1 daughter and 2 sons; Arlene, Glen, and David.

Rhoda is married and lives with her husband, Ed. Matner and three daughters, Elaine, Sheila, and Maureen in Westbank, B.C.

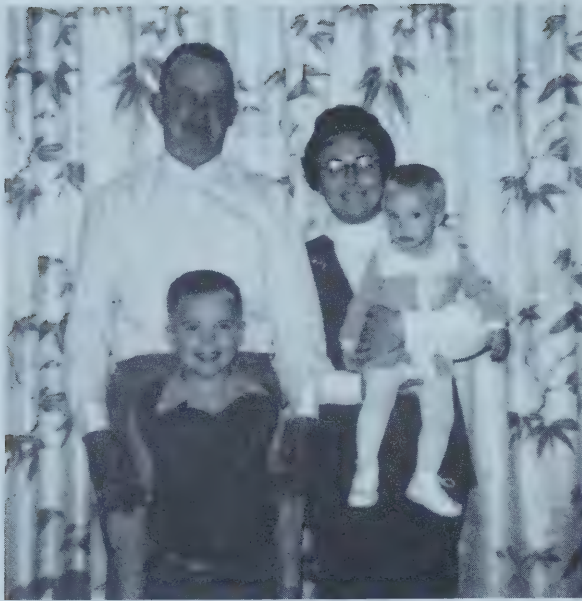
Mabel, altho' initially moving to the U.S.A. with her parents, returned to the Peace River country and married Len Friedel. They are farming at Fairview, Alta., and have four children, Brenda, Bruce, Cathy, and Shelley.

Fran, being the youngest also moved to California with her parents. She lives and works in the Los Angeles area.

Stoby, Harold

Harold and his uncle Andrew Fossum filed on homestead land, S ½ 10-81-8-6 in the Fourth Creek area in 1957. Andrew came to the district in the spring of 1958 to start clearing his land and spent every summer there until his death in 1967.

Harold and his wife Dorothy bought and moved to 5 acres in the Blueberry Mtn. area in 1962. This 5 acres, Pt. SE 22-80-8 W6, was the original Blueberry sports grounds and from old tales, it is gathered that many a good time was held there. Many pails of glass from broken bottles were picked up off this ground when Harold and Dorothy first moved there. You can still push a shovel down in the ground almost anywhere and hit glass. There is a story from years back, that one of the bachelors, of the area, in an inebriated condition, hid some money in a bottle behind where the old hall stood. A few days later, after he had sobered up, he came back to get his



Stoby Family Picture.

money but could never find it. Maybe it is still out there buried under some rock or log!

Harold, licenced mechanic and welder, set up a shop in an old log building, which had been the first hall and school, in Blueberry Mtn. He also began clearing his homestead land. Dorothy taught school at Blueberry Creek. In 1965 a son, Darrell was born and Dorothy retired from teaching. The garage business wasn't showing enough profit, so Harold went working for a pipeline company and also spent a year working at the Hudson Hope Dam.

In 1969 Harold came home and drove a school bus for two years until he started to work at the Spirit River School Division garage in Rycroft. In 1970, a daughter was born, Sherida-Lee.

In 1976, after seventeen years of trying to make their marriage work, Harold and Dorothy decided to go their separate ways. Darrell and Sheri live with their mother in Blueberry Mtn. Harold lives in Rycroft and continues to work at the School Division garage.

Cadets show stuff

By **LEONARD THOMASON**
of our staff

The annual inspection and march past of Grande Prairie's 49th Loyal Edmonton Regiment, 2850 Cadet Corps, will be held at the Southside Recreation Centre tomorrow.

The event, open to the public, gets underway at 6:45 p.m. and involves Army, Navy and Frontiersmen cadets. Members of the Canadian Forces, RCMP, Royal Canadian Legion and Legion Auxiliary will be in attendance at the building formerly known as the Grande Prairie Armories on Clairmont Rd. at 90 Ave.

Colonel J.R. Stone, former commanding officer of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, will take the salute.

Presentations of trophies, awards and demonstrations will be made and cadets will put on displays of the year's activities.

Colonel James Riley Stone, 71, who has two bars of Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross, was born in



Colonel J.R. Stone

Gloucestershire, England and came to Canada at the age of 18 in 1927. At the outbreak of World War Two he had been employed in Alberta's Forestry Service in the Peace Country and once farmed in Blueberry

Mountain (90 km northwest of Grande Prairie).

ENLISTED 1939

He enlisted in the Edmonton Regiment in September in 1939 and started a long career in

which he served every appointment in the regiment.

He was commissioned as lieutenant from the ranks in 1942 and, with the rank of major, took command of a regiment in 1944. After the German surrender he left his service battalion with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Under the rank of colonel, he volunteered for the Canadian Army Pacific Force to take command of the regiment's Third Battalion. Then Colonel Stone took charge of an officers' school in British Columbia and retired from active service in May 1946.

In 1950, Colonel Stone volunteered for the Special Service Force in Korea and assumed command of the Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, where he added a second bar to his Distinguished Service Order.

He retained command of that regular unit until 1953.

In 1954, he was appointed provost marshal of the Canadian Army. He is now deputy commissioner of penitentiaries and resides in Victoria.

The Harold Tollefsrude Family

Harold and his wife Mary are originally from the Hythe, Beaverlodge area, but they and their family moved to Blueberry Mountain in March 1976. They moved into Vic Mitchell's original homestead, which is now owned by the Caryk Brothers. Harold has worked for Caryk Brothers as their foreman for the past three years on their farms.

Mary is Teacher's Aide at the Blueberry Creek School. They have three children, Terry, Nolan and David who attend the Blueberry Creek School.

Mary's grandfather Guy Chase Dart made his first homestead in the Whitburn area in 1928-29, just north of Harry Howell's, but only stayed a few months, then moved on to Montney, B.C.



The Tyler Family.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tyler: 1927-1942

Frank and Frances Tyler settled in Blueberry in 1927, and lived in the old Willis home on the S.E. ¼ 17-80-7-W, 6, until they had their own log cabin built on the northwest quarter of the section. This was later the home of Len and Florence Jeffery, and is now owned by Alex and Heather Graham.

The Tylers had two daughters, Mary and Ruby, and one son James. The girls attended Blueberry Mountain School, and later Blueberry Creek School. James was only one and a half years old when they left.

Frank's mother (Grandma Tyler) lived in a little house near Frank's. She walked with a cane and had



Mrs. Tyler and Ruby.

some difficulty getting around, but she went quite regularly to the W.M.S. meetings.

After a few years in Blueberry she went to live with another son in Manitoba and was never back north.

Frances Tyler was quite active in the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church, and was Secretary-Treasurer of the group for some years. Shortly after war broke out Frank Tyler joined the army and while stationed in Nanaimo, B.C., sent for the family. They joined him in Vancouver and have since been living in and around that area. They now have 5 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren, and are at the present time living in Maple Ridge, B.C.



Tylers, Mrs. Corbett and Mrs. Mollinga.

C. H. Walker

Charles Hugh "Hiram" Walker was born March 19, 1874 in Walkerton, Ont. He served in the Boer War until 1903 and was decorated. He was a school teacher in Southern Alberta and served overseas in World War I. Following his discharge, he homesteaded in Blueberry Mtn., on the south half of 9-80-8-W6. Here he built a log cabin, with a sod roof and a sod floor. Ayl Grenache and his bride lived with him until they built their own log house in 1920.

Hiram was sent out to get some whiskey for a friend before he came to Blueberry and forgot the brand name he was supposed to get and arrived home with "Hiram Walker" and the name stuck. Because his initial was 'H' many people thought that that was his real name.

His cabin was on the north bank of the Blueberry creek and he dug out steps in the hill to walk down and get water from the creek below. The banks behind his house always had crocuses in spring. That



C. H. Walker.

was a treat for the Grenache kids, to take the first one to school in the spring. Marie Grenache died at the time of the crocus blooms and Hiram picked a goodly number which the Penny family fashioned into a wax wreath.

Hiram's first house burned down and a second one was built with a board floor and a shingled roof. He told the Goodwill Society they could have his house for a club house when he died. They moved it to a more central location and used it for many years.

Hiram was a regular visitor at the Grenache home and spent Christmas with them every year. When Ayl joined the army, Hiram tried to get in as well but was too old, even if he lied about his age as Ayl did. He was very lonesome after the family moved away.

C. H. Walker passed away in 1945.

The Roy White Family

I was born in a log cabin at a logging camp on Columbia Lake, B.C. in 1906. My father, Issac White was born at Gilbert County, Ontario and my mother, Minnie Nixon was born at Muskoka Lakes, Ontario. They married in 1903 and came west to the Columbia Valley in British Columbia. We lived for some years in B.C. at Athemir and Fort George and came to Spirit River in 1916 where I remained until I came to Blueberry Mountain in 1933. For three years I rented the land known then as the Houston farm which now is owned by Bob Hampton. In 1936 I bought land from Vic Mitchell, four and one half miles east and one and one half miles north of the old Blueberry Mountain store. That year I married Mary Kerr from Sturgeon Lake. Her father, Thomas Kerr had come to Canada from Scotland in 1878. Mary's mother Agnes Taylor followed in 1901. The three Kerr children were the first white children born at Little Red River where Tom Kerr was employed with the Hudson Bay Company. They moved to Sturgeon Lake in 1911.



Plowing with eight horses.



Four Horse Team.

When I started farming all the work was done with horses. I had quite a few horses, some of the best in the district. Working the land, we used from four to eight head, depending on the job being done. Brushing was all done with an axe and to break the land I used eight horses and a brushbreaker, a big heavy plow that just plowed out the stumps. One year I broke seventy acres with eight horses, and they were pretty tired when we finished. In 1945 when I bought the tractor the horses were sold except for one team. I had a large threshing outfit which I later sold to Walter Mitchell where it still stands. When the combines took over the threshing machine just faded.

We had good years and bad years but we always managed somehow to get along. In those days there was a sharing and closeness with neighbors — good neighbors like the Gilgans, Reeves and Rolly Hoggarth. Hoggarth provided us with many laughs with his stories.

Our family came along as the years progressed; Dorothy was born in 1937. She married Garth Chapman in 1958 and lives in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. They have two boys and a girl.

Gilbert, our only son was born in 1938. He was killed in a freak accident in 1944.

May was born in 1939. She married Elwood Hartwick in 1960 and lives in Edmonton. They have three boys.

Elizabeth was born in 1941. She married Melvin King in 1962 and lives in Turner Valley.

Thelma was born in 1943. She married Bob Lidster in 1966 and now lives in Peace River. They have a boy and girl.

Ethel was born in 1945. She married Angus Scott in 1969 and lives in Peace River. They have a boy and a girl.

Dorothy and May started school in Blueberry Mountain. When Liz started school they switched to

Blueberry Creek. They had a problem getting to school a good part of the time as we were three and one half miles away. They used every means possible in transportation, horse back, horse and cutter, horse and buggy, rode bicycles and walked sometimes.

There always seemed to be some time to enjoy ourselves and as years passed and the coming of machinery, things got easier. One big event at our place was making homemade ice cream. The custard Mary made was thick and rich from the cream we got from our cows. We had some real feeds at times and as the girls got older it became a regular Sunday event.

Christmas was always a big day for our family. Some years we were at my brothers and some years we were home. On New Years Day my folks always came out regardless of the weather and this was another big day.

When Dorothy started school she rode a horse called Two-Bits and on occasion if something spooked the horse she would dump Dorothy and come home. Later Dorothy would come tearfully trudging along.

When May was three or four she was supposedly watching Liz while Mary was getting something from the cellar. While leaning over the edge to see if Mary was coming she fell in and broke her wrist.

Liz wanted to be a boy so one day she hid between



Roy White family, 1969.

the cook car and the ice house and cut her hair and started calling herself Billy.

Thelma spent a time in hospital when she was small and the running water fascinated her so, that one day she turned on all the taps in the bathroom.

We fondly remember our dog "Bark". Bark was very protective of the girls, and was a good babysitter for Ethel when she tried going too close to the dam. Mary heard a lot of howling and went out to find Ethel trying to get past Bark to go down the hill. Bark was given to the girls by a neighbor, Mel Daniels, who had stopped one evening and had a dog with him. A few days later the dog arrived back at the farm and was returned to Mel. Bark promptly came back, where he made his home.

In 1964 we built a new house, replacing the log house we'd lived in for over thirty years. Time passes quickly and before we knew it the girls were gone and there was just Mary and I left. We sold the farm in 1968, and we spent the winter of 1969 in British Columbia figuring on settling there, but the longer I stayed away the more homesick I became. In the fall of 1969 we moved to Grande Prairie where we lived until 1979. We then moved to Peace River where we are at present.

History of Henry (Scotty) Young as told to Wilma Bird

"Scotty", as most people know him, was born in Cahisness, Scotland on September 9, 1897 of Scotch parents, one of nine children born and raised there. He attended school until 14 years of age, and after leaving school worked for his father at home doing dairy delivery and general cartage work.

When war broke out in 1914, Scotty was too young to join, but did so in September of 1915, enlisting at Buhley, Scotland and getting over to France in the summer of 1916. He was hit in the knee by a piece of shrapnel in January of 1917, was in hospital near the battle lines, then sent back to a convalescent hospital in Newcastle England . . . By September of 1917 he was back to France again and close to the front till the following January, near Ypres. He would be in the trenches for two weeks, then out for two weeks. He was batman for a transportation officer in the Somme. Supplies were transported by horses to a certain point, and then carried by men to the front at night under cover of darkness. Of course they were subject to shelling at all times. The trenches themselves were miserable places, constantly cold, filthy with lice, and usually muddy . . . The Germans broke through the Allied lines in March of 1918 and as a consequence the whole front moved back a long way, with many soldiers on both sides making the supreme sacrifice. Scottie's regi-



Scotty Young, Soldier.

ment was sent to another line in Belgium, and then to Germany. From there he was furloughed back to Scotland in October of 1918, finally getting his discharge from Germany in April 1919 . . . His mother could have gotten a pension while he and his brothers were serving, but refused it, calling it "blood money".

All of Scotty's brothers having preceeded him to Canada, he decided to join them in May of 1920. He first came to Liberty, near Long Lake, Sask. where he worked for his brother Joe putting in basements, making 5 dollars a day plus board, which was big money for those days. He left Joe after freeze-up to join two other brothers in Foremost, Alta. They were grain farmers who had been there for over ten years . . . Work was not very available there, so he tried Calgary in the summer of the next year, but left there for the same reason, taking a train to Regina where he got a job on a farm at Wilcox, May 1921. That only lasted a month as even the food was on short rations there. He then went back to Liberty, Sask. with a stook-loader, but it was a wet fall and it wasn't possible to harvest much, so he went to Imperial where he harvested, plowed and did chores for a farm there over the winter.



Threshing Group.

Next spring 1922, he worked for another farmer but this apparently was also a no-pay job, so he quit, and went back to the other farmer at Imperial and stayed there most of the year — with pay!

Back to Alberta in 1923, to his brothers at Foremost who had a crop that year, so he stayed and helped one of them over that winter. In 1924 he rented a half section of land for himself, plowed a quarter section of it and seeded it, but it never even came up, there was only one small rain on June 17. He went to Moose Jaw to harvest that year, and stayed there for the winter . . . In 1925 he went to Ft. McLeod and rented a quarter which did produce some wheat. He stayed in Alberta over winter, then went to a brother who had moved to Shaunavon, Sask., and stayed there assisting him and others for most of 1926 through to '28.

In 1929 he made the big change, coming north to Spirit River by train with a farmer who was moving there from east of Shaunavon — looking for homesteads, but as fortune would have it they arrived with a four day snow storm, which made it impossible to see any of the new land available. They acknowledged temporary defeat, but returned in May of 1930 expecting to file on land in Gordondale. However, Scotty didn't like the looks of the land, and there was no feed for his horses, so he came instead to Blueberry Mtn. where he stayed with "Heavy" Tarr. Scotty was to do the cooking and supply half the grub, and to stay there for the winter of 1930 and '31. This he did and worked for "Shorty" Collins, Jim Grover and Big Bill Bordtz — all of whom had no money so paid no wages. He went to Saskatoon and worked for an older brother who was building houses, to make some money.

Scotty sees now he had a lot of his troubles on account of the companions he had — of course some of them had no money, but some of them were panhandlers, and almost all were alcoholics. Alcohol was a real problem in the district at that time. Quite a few made their own home-brew, and distributed to

those who didn't. A lot of hardship resulted because much money went into this that should have gone into the homes.

Most supplies were brought in from Spirit River by horse and wagon, or back-pack, and were very meagre as people could not afford much. Everybody had good gardens, though, and there was all kinds of wild meat available. One day one man got six deer in the one spot, and another time four moose in one locality — of course this was all divided among neighbors.

The original school was a log building and used for every social function. Later the community hall was built, and a new school building erected . . . Dances were a common form of entertainment with liquid refreshment flowing freely . . . The only two cars in the district were owned by George Houston and W. J. MacCormack. Everyone else had horses they rode or drove. Most people had their own cows . . . In clearing land, most people cut down trees by hand, used them for firewood, pulled out the roots and established the clearing. However there were many fires which did a lot of quick clearing on their own. Howard Pegg and Mr. Woods were fire-rangers for the area, and Mrs. Woods had the only piano in the district, used for many sing-songs.

Crops were good those early days, though prices were not, and they had to be taken out by horse and wagon, mostly to Spirit River — a two or three day trip. The fellows who drank heavily would stay much longer — sometimes much longer than they could afford . . . The winter of '30 and '31 were extremely mild, with very little snow, but the crops were good the following years. The following two winters made up for it, however, with late hard harvest, much snow and bitter cold.

Scotty "took-up" a homestead in November of 1933 (S.W. 20- Twp. 80, R. 8-W-6) that had been cancelled because no work was done on it. Then he bought a quarter section from Jack Campbell that had 9 acres broken, for \$300.00 — a lot in those days. He moved onto his home-half when he bought a quarter



Team with Stook Loader.

from Al. Morrison in 1949, and the adjacent quarter from the Kirkland's with a new house on it. He paid \$1,200.00 for the first quarter, and \$1,600.00 for the land with the house. The first crop paid for the land.

Scotty went into raising cattle later on — in the 30's and early 40's, and did quite well with that. He would have his calving arranged for the winter months, so as to not have it interfere with his spring and summer work; by fall the calves would have weaned themselves. He never lost many calves or cows by this method, and feels it was a successful one, but he had to be with them all the time to care for them.

His policy was never to be in debt, so he never bought anything on "time" but most others in the district were not that way. "Soldier Settlement" money helped, and most of the original settlers were ex-soldiers. A very real contribution over the years

has been his own lending money to various individuals without interest. Most have since returned it with "Thanks", since they could not have borrowed from the usual lending institutions.

In later years and better times Scotty has done considerable travelling. In 1963 he returned to Scotland, but had no inclination to stay. In '73 he went to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Hawaii on a tour, then returned to Australia and New Zealand on his own the following year. Most other winters he has gone to Vancouver, Calgary, etc., to visit relatives. However, Blueberry has always felt like home and he has gladly returned.

The summer of '79 saw Scotty sell the last of his land to a newcomer to the district, Mr. Wm. Shumaker, with the provision that he can continue to live in his old home as long as he pleases. He does plan to do more travelling, but "Home" is still here.

Fourth Creek

Minimum Requirements for Ranching

1. A wide brimmed hat, one pair of tight pants, and \$20 boots from a discount store.
2. At least two head of livestock preferably cattle, one male and one female.
3. A new air conditioned pick-up with automatic transmission, power steering and trailer hitch.
4. A gun rack for the rear window of the pick-up, big enough to hold a walking stick and a rope.
5. Two dogs to ride in the bed of the pick-up.
6. A \$40 horse and \$300 saddle.
7. A gooseneck trailer, small enough to park in front of a cafe.
8. A little place to keep the cows on land too poor to grow crops.
9. A spool of barbed wire, three cedar posts and a bale of hay to haul around in the truck all day.
10. Credit at the Credit Union.
11. Credit at the bank.
12. Credit from your father-in-law.
13. A rubber cushion to sit on for four hours at the auction ring every Wednesday.
14. A good pocket knife, suitable for whittling to pass away time at the auction ring.
15. A good wife who won't get upset when you walk across the living room carpet with manure on your boots.
16. A good wife with a good full time job at the courthouse.

Our Homestead

by George Agrey

Robert Agrey first applied for his homestead in 1967. It consisted of ½ section located the east half of 11-81, range 9. June Agrey, his wife applied for her homestead three years later.

After accumulating this land Bob decided to clear some land and rent his homestead out. In 1971 he cleared 200 acres on his homestead and 180 acres on his wife's homestead. After this was done he started to rent his land. Bob Paul rented it for a few years but

found out it was not very profitable, so the Agreys decided to move up and farm it themselves.

The years before Bob moved his family up, he made a preliminary trip and tried to get the land in shape. He had a hired hand for awhile but he quit. The next summer, after school was out, he moved his family up to the farm. The first year he and his family cleaned up one hundred acres by picking the roots and rocks off. There was already 100 acres in crop and this would make it 200 for the following year. The fall came and he had his crops custom combined.

The winter came and there wasn't too much to do, so Bob bought 6 range cows. This meant that corrals and a barn had to be built. He built the corrals that winter and the barn the following summer. In the summer of '76, he started building granaries, a garage, and the barn. The whole year was spent on building — mostly fences for his cattle.

The following year he decided to buy more land. Bob bought the ½ sec. beside him (W ½ 11-81-9). That summer was spent breaking up the land and picking roots, and it was finished the following year. In '78 he bought more cattle, which now made 20 head. He planted rape on his new land, and harvested 15 bushels an acre.

In 1980 Bob hopes to finish his breaking, for cropping in '81. Presently Bob and June have 4 children, three girls and one boy, two are married, one living in Spirit River, the other in Ohaton, the other girl in Red Deer, son George at home.

Mrs. Myrtle Allan

Myrtle's son Charlie worked on the land survey in 1949 and 50'. He picked the land she was to file on in 1951. Myrtle was one of the first women to file on land and the only woman to work her land by herself. There were no roads when she first came to the area and the journey to her homestead was made on horseback, from her home in Blueberry, riding along the cutlines.



Myrtle Allen on homestead.



Crew at Bear Creek Bridge.

Andy Clarke did the first brushing and piling, Herman Hindmarch broke the first 35 acres which were seeded to oats. The farm work was done by a John Deere tractor and a team of horses. When the first home was built, the horses were housed in one half and the family in the other.

Fred Sandy was the district with his "Cats" doing some brushing, so he was hired by Jack Bird and some local farmers to put the first road to the top of Bear Creek. There was no bridge in the creek, so in the summer of '54 a crew of men spent the summer putting a bridge over this creek. Dave Bozarth the blacksmith at Blueberry made the pins for the bridge. At the opening ceremony, a government representative who was present, commented that since the people of the area showed such co-operation in the bridge building, the Government would see that a new bridge would be built and one was started that same fall.

Myrtle never found the life lonely, there was lots of visiting, dances, a ball team and the yearly picnic. There was lots of wild game, Myrtle trapped and made fur garments. All the meat and berries had to be canned. There were a lot of wolves in those days; when the Lassiter project was started, some of these



Dave Bozarth on Bear Creek Bridge.

animals were killed on the road. With the Lassiter clearings came better roads which were so badly needed.

Mrs. Allan had a 20 year homestead lease. She was required to pay $\frac{1}{8}$ crop share which was delivered with her other grain to the elevator in Spirit River, about 45 miles. There was a lot of government red tape and inspectors, who carefully measured the house and out building to make sure they were of the required value. The power was never put in, as she spent only the summer months on the farm, and the winters in Blueberry. Later on Myrtle retired to the west coast, she is now living in Kamloops, B.C. and the farm is rented out. Her days of picking roots and canning moosemeat are over but she still enjoys the peace and quiet the homestead meant to her.

Carl and Mona Bozarth

The Bozarth's were homesteaders of the Fourth Creek area. Carl was originally from Sexsmith, Alberta. His wife Mona, originally came from Turner Valley.

When Carl first came up to the area in 1950, he was working for a survey outfit in Dawson Creek. This was just after the big fire in Fourth Creek, and Carl said that since there was only small bush, he could look out across the country for miles.

Carl came back again in 1951 or '52 to begin homesteading. He was homesteading the land where Fitzpatrick's live now. He came to work on the homestead in 1957, but Mona and their daughter Gaynell, who was three at the time, just stayed for the summer months.

The Bozarth's arrived in Fourth Creek to remain in 1965. Carl still worked in Dawson Creek, while Mona and Gaynell stayed on the homestead by themselves. Carl's mother, Granny Bozarth originally owned the land they now own and live on.

Mona's initial impression of the area back in those years, was similar to many of the homesteading wives. 'I can't believe this is happening to me' was her thought. She said it looked like the end of the

world to her and she felt like throwing up her hands and leaving. However, Mona agrees that she now likes the area.

In order to arrive at the homestead, the Bozarth's had to travel across the old Josephine. There had to be tractors available to pull the people out or they couldn't have come across. One time the Bozarth's were crossing on the tractor, and Gordon Peebles, another homesteader of that time, had to sit on the top of the tractor so it wouldn't hop up and down.

On several occasions, they had to drive Gaynell out on their little tractor to meet the school bus because the road was flooded. One time, when Gaynell was practising driving the little tractor, her mother and the dog were riding behind in the wagon. Gaynell jerked the wagon and her mother and the dog fell into the mud.

Carl and Mona had two children. Diane, who was born in 1944 in Turner Valley, and Gaynell, born in 1954, in Dawson Creek. Diane and her family now live in Edmonton, and Gaynell and her family live in Rycroft. Carl and Mona have seven grandchildren — six of Diane's and one boy of Gaynell's. The Bozarth's also have one great-grandchild.

1980 finds the Bozarth's still living in their original house on their homestead. Carl works for the government on construction crews, something he has been doing for ten years. Mona remains at home to look after the place.

Iner and Leona Bozarth

Iner and Leona Bozarth, both of French origin, came to the Blueberry Mountain region to work, mostly in lumber camps. Iner also worked on the survey crew that was working in the area. Being on the survey crew he knew what land he wanted, so when it was open for homesteads, he filed in 1951 and when we got a shack built we started living on the land in 1952.

Conditions were horrible: no decent house, no

money, and no roads. However, there were millions of hungry mosquitoes and plenty of bush. The mosquitoes had easy access to our shack which was built of slabs, so they moved right in. We had to have a smudge going night and day or get eaten alive. Naturally our outhouse was also made of slabs, so whenever we went there, the smudge went also.

One year we cleared about ten acres by hand — this also called for a smudge. We made one in an old wash tub, and whenever we moved we had to drag the smudge with us. I never knew there were that many mosquitoes in the world let alone one area. We called our place "The Smoke Pot Ranch". Two children, Jack and Loretta, were there with us. Our others were on their own so never lived on the homestead.

Every winter we worked in camp. Wages at that time were not what they are today, so with living costs, and buying machinery, we were never out of debt, but we were never hungry. We always made enough to have a couple hundred dollars over after paying our grocery and gas bills. Our storekeeper Jack Bird carried a heavy load, as I am sure he never refused anyone credit for groceries. If it had not been for his help I'm sure not too many homesteaders could have stayed long enough to prove up on their land.

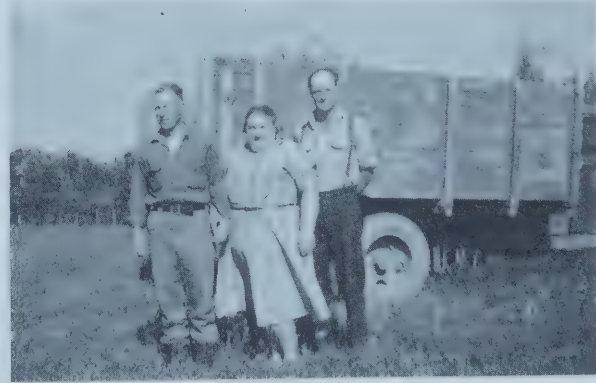
A great aid in living there was moose, and we all had plenty of moose meat. In fact I said if I ever got out of that country I'd never eat moose meat again. Now I would just love some good old moose meat.

We went through a lot, but the memories are not all bad. We had some good times and also some good neighbors and friends whom we miss (but not enough to move back).

We decided to move to Kelowna, so in 1965 we made a payment on a small home there, and moved. We both got jobs so paid off our farm debt and house. A few years later we sold the farm. In fact a lot in Kelowna costs more than we got for our half section, but no regrets. We sold our first property in Kelowna



Original Slab Shack.



Iner, Leona and Gordon Peebles.

and now have a larger and very comfortable home. We are both retired, so plan on doing some traveling. Kelowna is a beautiful place to retire to, so keep that in mind when the mosquitoes get you down.

Our son Jack is happily married with three lovely children — 2 girls and a boy. They are in business for themselves “Pets and Plants Shop” and are doing well.

Loretta is also here; is married to Dan Steger who works in the Plywood Plant, and is a very good provider. They have two darling children, so Loretta is kept busy with her home and looking after her little girl and boy.

We are so thankful to have our two children who went through homesteading with us, still living near us. We so enjoy the children. It seems as though one has more time to enjoy their grandchildren. We were so busy when our own children were growing up we missed a lot.

One hilarious episode had to do with our house. Going to town was an all day affair, so this one day Iner had to go to town. Jack and I decided our slab house was too small, so as soon as Iner left we decided to build on. We had plenty of slabs so no problem there. We went right to work and sure enough we got it done — two more rooms a bedroom and porch.

It was real dark when Iner came home so he did not see our new addition (slabs all look alike anyway). He went to where he thought the door was, but not so. Our blueprint called for the door in a different place. We purposely had the lights out, and just sat there nearly bursting with laughter as Iner's confusion mounted. Anyway we finally let him in and we all had a good laugh.

Jack and I also had a real laugh one day. Iner again had gone to town, so seeing as I had some dandelion wine ready to strain, we decided to get busy and we did. The outcome was that our dog got drunk. Jack carried out the pulp and the dog ate it. He was lying in the doorway and I told him to get out. He couldn't get up, and couldn't raise his hind quarters. I thought his back was injured, then when I spoke again he sat up and all he did was yawn. Jack then noticed the pulp was gone, so we finally knew what had happened. It was hilarious. He managed to stagger outside, and when he tried to run with the other dog he just kept falling over. He sure was one funny dog, but a smart one, as he never again ate dandelion pulp (a lot smarter than some humans).

We had one harrowing experience that could have been tragic. Loretta, aged 2 got very ill one day, and the second day we started for town to see what the trouble was. It took nearly a full day to get to Jack Bird's store. There Mrs. Bird, our nurse, said she

thought it was appendix, so again, thanks to the Birds we got her in on time. They sent their man with the car to rush us in to the hospital (I'm sure speed limits were broken that time). Loretta was operated on immediately and for a few days it was touch and go but she made it.

Anyway we all survived, and I don't think homesteading hurt us too badly, but I sure would not want to do it over again.



Francis Dolen with van. (Story on page 122.)



Guy and Joe Plantinga with team and wagon. (Story on page 122.)



Tommy, Roy and Peter with bear. (Story on page 122.)

Fred and Gail Benson

Fred Benson first came to look over the Peace River area in 1977. Later my mother and I came here from Kelowna, B.C. for a short stay during the summer, then later, in '78 Dad purchased Harvey Loewen's land, W. ½ 34-81-R.9. Dad brought us from Kelowna to spend the summer of '78 at our new farm where we spent two months in a camper. During this time we went to fastball games and worked in the fields. That fall I attended the Savanna school for 4 days, with a friend, Betty Weleski.

Again that fall Mom and I returned to Kelowna, so I could attend school. During '78 and '79, Dad continued to make short visits to the farm to finish the fall work and haul grain. Then in the summer of '79 we moved permanently and again we lived in our small camper for 3 months until our house trailer arrived. I attended Savanna school.

In the beginning of grade 10, I found it very different and difficult from my B.C. schooling. I was introduced to activities that I had never heard of, such as Initiation Day, where I, the only one, of the Grade 10 students, along with grade seven students would be initiated into the high school.

Mom and Dad got involved in community activities such as curling, and dances. Mom accepted the position of Secretary of the Savanna Ag. Society. We have found the community a very enjoyable place to live.

submitted by Malla Benson (daughter)

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burbee 1947-1980

In January 1947 Bob and I met in Edmonton, and we were married on July 11th. We came to Dawson Creek, and that was our honeymoon. Bob started working on cats around Dawson Creek, and I worked in cafes.

Sometime that fall we moved to the farm that Bob owned at Lymburn. He had 8 horses and some farm

equipment at that time. We had 20 chickens given to us by Bob's brother Cliff and his wife, so the chickens kept us in eggs. Later we got 2 pigs and a cow, and in the spring we got 100 chicks — some of which were eaten and the rest were canned in jars for use later.

Bob was working on the farm and doing some carpenter work to keep things going. We had some garden planted that summer, and I canned what we couldn't eat. I also picked a lot of strawberries and other fruit to make jam.

That summer sometime, Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Shofner came down and told us about homestead land that was open. We all went down and had a look at it and liked it. This land was in Township 81, across what was known as the Josephine (but later called Hamelin Creek on the map). Shofners and Burbees went to Peace River and filed on homesteads, and some time later we got the land, so that was the end of Lymburn for us.

In 1948, around Christmas time we moved in with the Shofners at Huallan. That Christmas Bob's sister, Irene and Ted Cook and family in Hythe had us for Christmas dinner, and also had the Shofners.

In 1949 Cooks looked after 20 chickens and our cow for us until we got moved to our homestead in Josephine country. (Now, they are both gone to rest.)

Bob went to work in Grande Prairie in the bush, but his luck failed him. He had logs come down on him and ended up in Grande Prairie Hospital till some time the end of February. When he came out of the hospital, I was going in to Hythe to have a baby. Eleanor was born there on March 14, 1949, delivered by Dr. Glass.

Some time that May, we got moved across the creek onto our homestead. We had Otto Hessler's granary to live in until that fall. During the summer Bob traded some horses to get some land cleared, and worked on Otto Hessler's house. We also got our log cabin built for winter.



First Home (Burbee).



Birthday Party at Burbees.

As it got cold, we decided to put the cow, calf, and the 20 chickens into the barn that we had also built. I still don't know how we ever got through all of this work. Bob was on crutches most of the summer and we had very little money, but nobody seemed to be worried about money at that time. All that seemed to matter was that we have good health, food on the table, and a warm cabin to live in. We bought very little from the store, just what we had to have, as we all had good gardens and lots of moose meat.

No matter how cold it was, even 60° below; if it wasn't at our cabin, it would be somewhere, that a card game was going on at all hours of the night.

All we had to get around with in those days were horses; no cars, and the winters were real cold with lots of snow compared to what they are today.

On March 4, 1952, Ken Burbee was born in the Grande Prairie hospital, delivered by Dr. Dobson. That was our last winter on the homestead. We spent our winters around Spirit River and summers on the homestead, until 1955, then we moved to Grande Prairie.

Bob was working on a refinery, Eleanor started school, and Ronald Burbee was born November 14, 1955 in the Grande Prairie hospital delivered by Dr. Dobson. We spent two years in Grande Prairie, then moved to Fort St. John where Bob worked on the pipeline.

In the spring of 1958 we moved to the farm in Chetwynd. We sold our homestead in Township 81 to George Sauder and got some cattle for the down payment. The kids and I stayed on the farm and looked after the stock while Bob worked out to make ends meet.

In 1964 we sold the farm at Chetwynd and moved into town. Bob got on with the Department of Highways. He is retiring this spring, and as for myself, I have been waiting on tables from time to time.

The kids are on their own now; Eleanor is married and has 2 boys and 1 girl. Her husband is Ralph

Marshall and he is a trucker. They are living in Fort St. John. Ron lives in Dawson Creek, and works wherever there is good money.

Ken is a cat operator and is also living in Ft. St. John.

Reminiscences of Armand and Ellen Cyr

"Ellen dear, remember when we first came out here to Silver Valley? — that was a long time ago."

"Yes Armand, we got the land in 1964."

"There have certainly been a lot of changes since then. The roads are much better, and there are now telephones. Remember that bus load of kids that got high centered?"

"Yeah, that was funny. It was Harry Van Den Dungan's school bus, wasn't it?"

"Yep."

"And it was spring."

"Spring of '66."

"Yeah, and the roads were bad. Muddy as ol' heck, but the fields were still frozen."

"So he took to the field, by our place, and got high centered on a root pile."

"His passengers all walked over to our corner and waited while John Salamon and Stewart Plantinga hooked up their wagons to their tractors, and took them all home. Springs were pretty bad, with little or no gravel on the roads."

"Didn't go to town too often during those times. If we did it was a fast trip on the frost. There was only one way to town too, from our corner, and that was past Bird's Store and across that old bridge."

"We moved our first trailer through that bridge a couple of times. The first time, when we moved out in '68, we just about lost that trailer."



Present Home.



Cyr Family.

"Yeah, I don't know what happened there Mother, but it had something to do with the trailer moving a little too fast for John's tractor."

"Boy, it really started to bounce and couldn't be slowed down."

"It was close, and I was really scared!"

"I can imagine dear."

"But we got it to Salamon's farm and set it up. It wasn't like our own farm or anything, living in the same yard as Salamons. It was much better for me than living in the 8 x 20 foot shack with John Salamon and Roger Renschler during the winter while I worked."

"Now you could live at home while you worked and farmed."

"It took a lot of skimping and saving to pay for the land clearing. I even sold my boat and car!"

"For the land we didn't even think we'd get! We signed up for some land we had never seen, figuring we wouldn't get it . . ."

"But we got it and we came here to work on it, and we're still working on it."

"The trees weren't very tall then, were they?"

"No, Hon. They were only up to twenty feet tall."

"Man, those trees really grow."

"Yep. When I was cutting then, I could see over the trees and quite a ways through them because they weren't very thick. Now all I see are trees all around me when I cut."

"It took a long time to develop that land. Lots of roots and rocks were picked. Remember how the kids ran around getting all the roots and rocks they could find those first couple of times?"

"They do all the running around they can now to get out of picking those roots and rocks. It took a long time and a lot of money."

"Crystal and Miles sure liked the farm. They had a lot of fun. It was pretty cold those first two winters out here. It got down to 60 deg. below zero a few times and there was lots of snow. Man, we sure had more than enough of those years!"

"You remember that ride I gave you and the kids on the toboggan the first winter out here?"

"Not really."

"We hooked the toboggan to the back of the truck and I drove. You and the kids rode on the toboggan while I drove you around. Finally I started home and when I turned into the yard I turned too sharp and you three went flying over the snow bank, and I left you sitting in the snow."

"Oh yeah, we were all covered with snow, and the kids were so surprised they didn't say anything!"

"Then Lex was born in the next summer."

"1967, right Mom?"



Cyr Trailer Home.

"Yep, that's when you were born. How come you're home from school early?"

"Short day. Don't you remember?"

"Oh yeah."

"I remember when Lex was born really well. That was the time Dad burned the potatoes when he was frying them. I don't know why I remember that, but I do!"

"I don't know why she remembers that either. I don't remember burning them."

"Mom, how come we moved back to Rycroft?"

"Your Dad got a job with Dikas which paid more money. We left the farm for a year after we planted clover on the land."

"But after that year he worked on it."

"Yeah, I worked on the land whenever I could — weekends, during the summer."

"Finally we moved back out here again."

"In 1974."

"This time with our own farm and a little more land to pick roots and rocks off."

"Now we really have a place we can call our own, and we can do with it as we please."

"We've put a lot of work into clearing this yard, cutting trees, picking garbage, rebuilding buildings, siding, and painting."

"And we've been clearing more land and slowly getting it all under cultivation."

"Isn't farming great, Dad?"

Crystal Cyr

In 1976 we cleared another 150 acres of brush. The land was beginning to take shape, and in 1977 we broke it and picked roots and rocks, getting it ready for seeding that spring. That fall we got a new crew cab truck. Our land was finally starting to make a few dollars.

Every year we try to build a new granary, and

paint them so they will last longer. According to the kids, the farm was turning into a real farm because we had animals. We got chickens, goats and geese to keep them busy. In 1978 we had a good crop. It sure helped to put us on our feet. We got the crop off before the snow came. Then in 1979 we worked on more breaking, and planned on getting it ready for seeding in spring 1980.

In March of 1980, Dad cut the rest of our standing bush down, and hopes to pile it before the year is gone. Dad still cuts and piles bush in the winter to help clear the rest of our land, and we hope by then the land will give us a living so he won't have to go on working in the winter. Also in 1980 we bought a new house trailer.

It took us 16 years from the time we applied and got the land, till the bush was all cut down, also many long hours of work each day. There are still many hours of work to put in until all the roots are gone, but I think it will be worth all this, as our kids really enjoy the farm life. Every year we manage to take a few days off to go back to our home town of Tilley and Burdett, which is in southern Alberta. The farming is quite different here from the prairie in the south.

Ellen Cyr

Harold and Roselle Davidson

Labour Day weekend in September of 1961 was the first time the Davidsons were in the Fourth Creek district, visiting their friends, the Nooys. After their visit they proceeded back to Edmonton. In Oct. of that year they filed on a homestead, the south half of 19-81-7. Once again they came to the Fourth Creek district, the Thanksgiving weekend of '62.

Harold and Roselle had two children, Sandra and Clifford. In the fall of '62 to January '63, Sandra was doing correspondence in British Columbia, then in January '63, she began school in Blueberry Creek. Harold had bought a "Cat" and brought it to Beleicki's corner; he was in partnership with a construction company. On the 23rd of January they moved a trailer up to Blueberry. It was situated across the road from the store, and they lived there till May, then moved to Bob Hewitt's farm, which is now owned by John Visscher.

All through '63 Harold worked in Fourth Creek breaking the land they had filed on. Harold was on the first board to put electrical power in the area. This is just one of many boards Harold was on. During the months of July and August the Davidsons lived in a trailer which was parked between Herman Hindmarchs and Walter Yanishewskis. Come Sept. they moved back to Hewitts.

Clifford started school in '64 in Blueberry Creek



Harold's Cat Skinner.

where he was able to finish grade two while Sandra finished grade three. In Sept. '65 they both enrolled in Savanna School which had just opened and had 4 rooms.

The Davidson land was located on the north ½ of 18-81-7, then they moved to Peatoka land which was across from Claude Fitzpatrick's place. Also in '65 they leased 10 acres of land from the government. It was situated 1½ miles east of Art Falds. Happiness was brought into the family when in mid-summer of '65 the power was installed. Harold believes that this is one of the most memorable events which occurred. During '65 and '66 Harold along with the men working for him, brushed 1700 acres. In '67 the Davidsons went on a six-week holiday. They attended "Expo" in Montreal, and were accompanied by Miss Alma Ferrier, the district nurse. They also journeyed to the Maritimes.

Harold rented his land to the Rooses in '68 and '69. In 1971 the phones were installed throughout the district. Harold did custom cutting and piling of bush, the most he charged was \$16 per acre, (heavier bush) usually the price was \$10 or \$12 an acre.

Harold's mother lived in the Spirit River Lodge up until her death in 1970, having moved there in 1963. In the fall of '72 Sandra took her grade 12 in Spirit River, Clifford taking his in '74. In the meantime Sandra left for NAIT in Edmonton. Before her graduation she married David Lindsay of Blueberry Creek, May 24, 1975, the same year Clifford graduated from Spirit River High. The following February, Harold, Roselle, and Clifford spent a 6-week vacation in England.

In May of '76 the Davidsons sold their land to Mr. and Mrs. T. Little, and are now living on the north ½ of 20-81-6, south of the Fourth Creek Hall, this was



H. Davison Family.

the Dennis Rude farm. From 1963 to 1976 Harold broke and cleared approximately 800 acres of land for himself. Also in '76 Sandra graduated from NAIT.

In March of '77 the Davidsons and Mel Parkers went on a three-week vacation to Texas. In November of that year the Davidsons celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. March of '78 found them once again off on a holiday, this time to Hawaii, and in '79, they and the Parkers had a 30-day holiday throughout the United States by bus.

In July of '79 the Davidsons bought an acreage near Beaverlodge where they plan to move to be near the children who have also bought land there, or close by.

submitted by Darlene Schultz

Dale and Joan DeBolt by Joan

Dale DeBolt was born in Washington in April of 1920. He and his family moved to Canada when he was seven weeks old, and settled about 35 miles east of Grande Prairie, in an area that was later to be called De Bolt. Dale lived there until April of 1940 when he and some friends joined the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, and went off to war. In 1941 the rest of his family moved to Spirit River.

While he was overseas he met and married Joan Leitch of Edinburgh, Scotland, in September 1945. Dale came back to Spirit River in January 1946, and I followed in July of the same year. We stayed in Spirit River till September, then moved over to Fairview where Heather was born in November 1947. While Dale was still overseas his dad had written to him and



Dale, Clifford, Jack, with H. E. DeBolt, 1946.

told him there was land available for homestead across the creeks, and he suggested that Dale and his brothers, Cliff and Jack, file on it when they came home. After looking around at other areas Cliff and Dale did file on the land later named by Bessie Keith "Hell's Half Acre".

Jack opted out for city living when he went to look at the land and found there wasn't even a road across the Josephine. I couldn't believe that we were going to live in such an isolated area, with no water, power, or plumbing; not even a road — which shouldn't have made that much of an impression on me because we didn't have a vehicle of any kind. Dale filed on the homestead in 1947, and hired Gene Dion to cut and pile 40 acres. While that was being done they lived in a tent. Heather and I went over to



Joan and Dale DeBolt, Heather and Alan also Leonard Nooy, 1956.

the homestead in May 1948 and lived in a granary with Cliff and Dale. We had no dugout at that time, so brought water from Spirit River in cream cans.

Uncle George gave Dale a team of horses (Dick and Blaze). He got a ride over to DeBolt with his dad and rode horseback on Dick and led Blaze back to the farm. He could hardly walk for a week afterwards! ! !

About this time George and Bill Keith, and Vi and Herb Kupsch arrived — all more affluent than we were. The Keiths had homes in town and had vehicles. The Kupsches also had a vehicle, and we depended on them to get to town for groceries, etc.

The contents of the granary were — a little black wood burning stove, a small table that Dale made with rough lumber, three old chairs, and orange boxes for cupboards. The bed was like something out of the ark; it was a split spring type that could be sort of folded up in the daytime. Cliff slept in a cot outside, in a tent-type cover tacked on to the back of the granary. The only new thing we had was Heather's baby carriage, which had to be kept outside in the daytime.



Dale, Joan, Heather and Alan with Uncle George, 1958.

I learned the hard way how to operate a coal oil lamp, when I used the wrong can to fill it. Instead of using coal oil, I used a can that had used-oil in it! ! ! Practically all of our pots and pans, dishes, etc., came from Pat Holmes' second hand store. My one and only attempt at making soap was disastrous. I tried to dissolve the lye in an aluminum bowl, and within minutes the lye made the bowl disintegrate, and the liquid ran all over the table, chairs, and floor, lifting the paint right off the new linoleum that I had begged for and been so proud of. I grabbed Heather and took her outside to get away from the fumes.

That summer we had our first crop of Saunders wheat growing, and Dale and Cliff started building the house 24 ft x 26 ft., a palace compared with the granary. We moved into it in September 1948, no partitions or anything, and bare floors I had to scrub with perfix weekly. When it was time to take the crop off we needed more granary space, so Dale boarded up what was later to become Heather's and Alan's bedroom, and stored his registered wheat in it until it could be sold the following spring.

By this time we had quite a few neighbours. The DeBolts and the Keiths bought a combine between them. Dale and Cliff had used their V.L.A. grants to buy the John Deere tractor with steel wheels for breaking. They were each entitled to \$2,300 for farm machinery, and the tractor cost just over \$5,000, which at that time seemed like a fortune to us. As well as that, we were given \$68 a month which was called an "Awaiting Return Payment", till we got our first crop off.

I knew nothing about farm life when I went onto the homestead, but Bessie Keith and Vi Kupsch educated me in the finer points of how to can moose-meat, bake bread, plant a garden, and how to distinguish between wheat, barley and oats. Without them I would have given up many times.

Our lives became a steady round of breaking, piling, burning, and forever picking roots, but we felt we really had it made when we bought a cow from Clarence Rye for \$200, paid for in monthly payments. We were on our way!

Alan was born in Spirit River, in January 1951 — things were looking up. Dale had promised my parents when we left Scotland that I would go home for a holiday in five years, and he kept his promise. Heather, Alan and I left the homestead on November 3, 1951, for a trip home, and Heather had her fourth birthday on the ship going over. When we arrived at my home in Edinburgh I had a lot to tell about the experience I'd had in that five years.

In 1953 when Heather had to start school, and since there was no school in our area, we bought a 22 acre lot south of Spirit River. From that time on we



Clifford DeBolt Wedding, 1962.

maintained two households — the farm in the summer, and in town in the winter.

In 1966 Heather married Alex Graham of Blueberry Mountain. They now live in Blueberry where they returned after living in Edmonton for ten years. They have two daughters, Karen 12, and Jodie 9.

Dale passed away in November 1970, at fifty years. Alan was married in February of 1971. He and his wife Lorraine (Malbeuf), and their two children; Cory 8, and Sean 6, are now farming the original homestead, as well as the land that was Cliff's and Grandad DeBolt's.

When Alan was born January 1st, 1951 he was the first New Year's Baby in the old Spirit River Hospital. When his daughter Cory was born January 4th, 1973, she was the first New Year's baby in the new Spirit River Hospital.

After Dale passed away, I moved to Edmonton and worked for Birks for a few years. After that I started working for the provincial government, and still work there.



Cliff, Virge and Dale DeBolt.

Harold and Marie Dow

It was a summer afternoon on June 30, 1965, when two small red-headed tomboys, a slender blonde woman, and a tiny blonde baby (just able to get around well) stared bewildered, amazed, and a little reserved as a very proud father told them that a plywood shack — and miles upon miles of trees — was home.

Our first home (the plywood shack) was on the very top of the hill, slightly nestled in the bush, but if one stood at the living room window one could see a large expanse of the valley below. It was unfortunate thus that the Highways Dept. wouldn't build the road the full distance up the hill. So on a crisp fall day, after a rain, Dad decided to move a quarter mile down the hill to meet the road, and here we have stayed. I remember it had rained previously and being quite small (pre-school age) my sister Bernice and I were told to stay inside so we wouldn't get hurt. So, being normal children we decided to dangle our feet out the door and in the mud. That is, till Mom caught us.

Life ticked on quite normally; Dad cleared and broke the land, we kids started school (each in our own turn) and Mom kept everything running smoothly — except for a few times during which she was visited by various wildlife: a deer (which was chewing on the clothes on the line), a moose (which was eating her flowers), and a bear (which peeked in her bedroom window to say "Good morning"). On these occasions chaos reigned supreme. These events occurred while we were living in the shack.

On Feb. 23, 1968, two fully loaded semi-trucks plowed through the muddy roads bringing our new house. We moved into this in October. During this year, in March, Mom started work at Savanna School as the Sec.-Librarian.

This new house also had its frightening occasions. On January 16th 1970, in the late hours of the night, our dog Teddy began to growl and snarl. When Dad stepped outside to see what was wrong, Teddy went running off into the field. When Dad called him back, about 25 to 30 wolves followed him. Needless to say, Dad and Teddy retreated into the house. In the weeks that followed, many wolf specialists claimed that this could not have happened because, they claimed, wolves don't run in packs that large. But when they traced this pack, they found that three groups of approximately ten each had joined up before they reached our place; this pack pulled down a moose and shortly afterwards they broke back into smaller groups again, to go in different directions.

In March of '71, Dad became the representative for Savanna and Blueberry on the Spirit River School Division Board. That same year, my sister Bernice

won a Public Speaking Contest; she was in Gr. 7. Now that same contest is an annual event. Dad remained the trustee until he became the Superintendent of Transportation for the Division in 1973, where he remained until his services were terminated in 1979.

In 1973, in July, Mom and Dad supervised 20 Savanna students, including my oldest sister, Susanne, on a two-week trip to Ontario and Quebec. In July of '76, Susanne graduated from Gr. 12, her class being the first graduating class in Savanna. In June of '78, Bernice graduated and on June 20th, 1980, the last Dow girl, Colleen, will graduate from Savanna School. Throughout the years at Savanna School, both my sisters achieved the highest academic standing in Gr. 9. In doing this, they had their names engraved upon a plaque stating so. Since 1975, Bernice and I have won at the zone level in the Royal Can. Legion Remembrance Day Essay contest for our poetry. Bernice did go further, she achieved 3rd at the National level. This ability (Mom believes) we inherited from my Dad, who had had a story of his published and who writes poems for personal pleasure. An example is this one he wrote about this country's fall season:

Autumn lingers, day on day,
The scent of snow hangs heavy in the air.
Golden leaves toss restlessly
on the forest floor,
New fallen from shivery branches
chill and bare
Nature soon will cover all beneath the snow
To sleep,
To rest,
No, not in death,
But dormancy,
to wait the spring,
the time to grow.

Throughout the years that we've lived here, there have been many changes. We began as grain farmers; changed to chickens, pig and grain farming. We are at present horse and grain farming. But no matter how much we have changed nor how much has happened, the beauty of this hill is still as breathtaking as on that June afternoon so many years ago. I now have been in this country 15 years and it's going to be quite difficult to leave and go to college. I know I'm going to miss this hill tremendously.

Submitted by: Colleen Dow

The Francis Dolen Story

by Alma Dolen

Francis and I were both born and raised in south central Alberta, he in Okotoks and I in Cochrane. We were married in Cochrane on June 21, 1947, and

spent the first five years of our married life farming my father-in-law's place in the Bottrel area. This wasn't proving too satisfactory and we wanted land of our own. Consequently the summer of 1951 we decided to take a look at the Peace River area of Alberta.

We toured the Grande Prairie district, then Hythe, Dawson Creek, Ft. St. John, and forty miles further up the Alaska highway. On our return to Grande Prairie we heard about land being opened for homesteading beyond Blueberry Mtn. in what was spoken of as, "across the creeks". Checking our map we found Blueberry Mtn. to be the end of the road. On arriving there we found the road went to the bank of the Hamlin Creek, locally called Bear Creek.

From here on, the trail, which was an old drilling rig road, plunged down the side of a canyon, forded the creek and wound up the other side in steep hair-pin turns. At the creek we met an elderly man who told us a few facts about the area. We later learned he was Joe Christenson, an old-timer from Blueberry Mtn. After winding and bumping for several miles through bush and tall willows, we became stuck in a mud hole. By the time we extricated ourselves we were well acquainted with the quality and quantity of the Peace country mud and mosquitoes.

On our return, as we again wound our way down into the Bear Creek canyon, we met a small procession coming up the hill. A man was driving a tractor pulling some machinery. Behind him, a small boy drove a team hitched to a wagon with a hay-rack on it. This was covered with a canvas top similar to



Fourth Creek School Group.

the old covered wagons and was to be their home for the summer. Behind their wagon was tied the milk cow, and bringing up the rear was a little bare-footed girl toiling along in the hot sun, busily switching at mosquitoes with a leafy branch. True pioneers! The next summer we discovered this family was our nearest neighbor, Herman Hindmarch and his two children Jimmy and Margery.

On our return home we stopped in Edmonton at the land office. Francis picked out a section on the map that had a creek running across it. This was to ensure that we had water for our stock, it was the south fork of Fourth Creek. We didn't know these creeks were only fed by surface run-off and were dry most of the summers. I filed on the west half of sec. 35. T. 81. R. 8 W.6. In the fall Francis, with Guy Gano, went to Edmonton where Francis filed on the east half of section 35 and Guy filed on the east half of section 36.

The next spring in April, Francis and Guy headed north to look at their homesteads. They struck out from Blueberry Mtn. on foot, crossing bank-full creeks on fallen logs or fording them. However they were unable to find their land locations and returned to Blueberry thoroughly soaked and tired. The next day they hired Mike Testawich, a local resident, to drive them there with his team and wagon. As he was a hunter and trapper he was familiar with the area.

On arriving at section 35, Francis saw a lot of bush, a rather swampy open area and beyond that, acres of fire-killed trees. He rolled a smoke, took a few puffs, then said, "She looks good enough to me", and so the die was cast that was to shape the rest of our lives. On returning to Cochrane, Francis loaded up an old John Deere "D", an old Oliver breaking plow and a few other second hand items. He hired a neighbour to truck the machinery and he and Guy with a tent and a few supplies headed north once more.

They returned to Cochrane the end of June, having done some breaking and acquired a team of horses from Joe Christenson. With the team they had skidded out and hauled fire-killed spruce logs and built a house on Francis' homestead. We lived in that house for several years before I finally got all the mud, charcoal and bark scrubbed off of those log walls.

The first week in July 1952, we loaded up our one-ton Fargo with some of our household goods, our two small boys, Peter aged 3 and Tommy not yet 2, and we were off on our big adventure.

What is now a ten hour drive on paved roads was then a long two days. The pavement ended at Edmonton, the gravel ended at McLennan and the grade dirt road came to an end at Blueberry Mtn. From the Bear



First School Picnic.

Creek on it was back to the old drilling-rig road to what is now the Fourth Creek Community Centre corner. Here we turned off on a cut line which went past Herman Hindmarch's homestead. As he had arrived the summer before he already had a small field cleared.

Past his place we plunged into the bush on what had once been the road to the old Gilligan homestead in the 1930's. There were still two little log cabins there but it was the end of any pretence of a road. By this time I was consoling myself with the thought that even this was much better than making the journey with teams and wagons as the early pioneers had done.

From the Gilligan place we bumped along through a chain of dry sloughs or muskeg, then followed a track through the bush where Francis had "squashed" down a few trees with the tractor. We ended with a thump in the dry bed of the Fourth Creek as it was too steep a bank to climb without the aid of a tractor. From here on we took our little boys pic-a-back and hiked the last half a mile down the creek to the cabin.

I have long since forgotten the date that we arrived but I will never forget our arrival. There had been a light shower shortly before which brought out the scent of the woods and the wild roses. The white-throated sparrows were everywhere, singing their little song that someone once described as "Oh-sweet-Canada, Canada-Canada". The sun was low in the west, and as we came around the last bend in the trail there was our little cabin, the sun shining brightly on the gable and smoke rising from the chimney. We were home at last!

Our first day on the homestead, was not without a bit of excitement. The Ganos had arrived the night before we did so we were all busy getting ourselves settled in. Guy was using the tractor to clear a place to

pitch two tents which would be the Gano's sleeping quarters for the summer. As he was going along a small side-hill the tractor hit a hole hidden in the under-growth and tipped over. However, very little damage was done and the trusty old team, with the aid of some poles soon had it upright again.

That first summer on the homestead passed very quickly. The men were busy clearing and breaking land while Alice and I busied ourselves with the usual pioneer woman's tasks. We carried water from a pot-hole in the creek, strained out the bugs and added a few drops of iodine for good measure. The days were filled with activity but what I remember most clearly was the stillness of the wilderness evenings, unbroken by any sounds of civilization. There were no dogs barking, no cows calling their calves in the evening, no motors rumbling in the distance, the sounds I was accustomed to. In their place we heard the sounds of the wilderness, the coyotes and foxes yapping and once the long drawn howl of a wolf. There were numerous night-hawks, the strange sound they made with their wings while diving after insects was new to me. Our clearing seemed to be a favourite meeting place for the horned owls. I'm sure they took a special delight in hooting it up on our cabin roof at night. I loved it all.

Through the summer we exchanged visits with the Hindmarch's and occasionally we all went berry-picking together. The men carried their rifles as bears were numerous. In the fall we hired Roman Yanishewski with his "Cat" to cut and pile about 90 acres of bush for us. In September we closed our cabin and headed south for the winter.

The next spring Francis left for the north late in March. The ground was bare at Bottrel but at the homestead the snow was still so deep that all that was visible of the hay mower in the yard was the seat. However, he and the Ganos, who had also returned, dug in and waited for spring. In due time our first crop and garden were planted. Francis then bought a small D4 cat with which he hoped to clear most of his land. It was pretty small for the job. Once it became entangled in a patch of heavy downfall and Francis had to rescue it with the swede-saw. However it served us faithfully for many years, and was used to clear land for some of the neighbours as well.

I arrived at the homestead in August after our daughter Anne was born. Ganos had now moved to their own place. One of the Gilligan cabins had been dismantled, hauled home and rebuilt as a make-shift stable.

We had some new neighbors move in, Ralph and Flossie Hindmarch and their five children. In the fall Francis, Guy and Herman hauled in a threshing machine belonging to Roy Collins of Blueberry, to

thresh our crops. A year or two later several neighbours pooled their scant resources and bought a threshing machine which served the community until combines took over.

That fall we built another log barn. When Cliff and Delphine DeBolt from the Josephine district (east of us) moved to town for the winter they brought us their milk cow, a flock of pullets, and a dog, "Old Mac" who remained as a faithful friend for years. A few pigs were soon added and we were in business.

Time went by quickly. In the spring of '54, the two Hindmarch families, the Gano's and ourselves began looking into the possibility of getting a school built. The next year the Spirit River School Division supplied us with material and a carpenter. With everyone pitching in to help, Fourth Creek school was ready for us by November '55.

For the first three years the children all took their schooling by correspondence with the help of a supervisor — Vivian Haugland, being the first one. Mrs. Evelyn Lambert from Happy Valley supervised for the next two years. She could tell a few tales about life in a teacherage out in the sticks. One incident I recall was the day her husband Stan came to take her and son Dean, home for the week-end. At that time we were using what was known as the thirty-dollar road, which was just a widened out game trail, and the hill was icy. After spinning ahead and sliding back for some time, Stan decided that Evelyn should ride in the trunk for added weight. She being fairly tall, didn't fit in too well with spare tires, jack, shovel and whatever. However it was all for a good cause and they finally made it to the top.

Vivian Haugland put on the first Christmas concert which was well attended. Son Tommy, aged 5, got the surprise of his life, when, becoming bored with sitting still, he wandered off and opened the door into the entryway. When he peeped out what should he see but Santa Claus waiting to make his appearance. I don't know who was the most surprised but it didn't take Tommy long, bursting with excitement, to spread the news.

During the summer of 1954 we held our first community picnic at the Ralph Hindmarch farm. Everyone brought refreshments and most of the afternoon was spent playing softball. The hordes of mosquitoes must have had a picnic too. The day was topped off with a dance held in the Hindmarch home. This picnic was an annual event for many years.

In the spring of '55 saw the arrival of our daughter Kathleen. Before the ground thawed out, Francis had taken the truck out and parked it at Roy Collins place on the other side of the creeks. He and George Hewson had then walked the eight or nine miles home in the dark. At the Josephine creek they had

taken off their jeans and long-johns, forded the waist deep frigid stream, and arrived home at 2:00 a.m. A few days later I packed my suitcase and headed out to civilization with the team and wagon. We were accompanied by Joe Wold, George Hewson and Herman Hindmarch with his team and wagon. Hewson's were staying temporarily at Blueberry and the two wagons were to haul in their house-hold effects on the return trip. As we crossed the Josephine creek we discovered too late that the crossing had washed out. One mare went right under and the water washed into the wagon box. However we made it across safely and began the difficult climb on frozen ground up the other side of the canyon. The horses were not shod so slipped and fell often with the wagon skidding side ways and bumping against the trees. When we finally made the top there really was no road, just a trail through the bush and the wagons bumped and jolted over old rotted logs. Pat Collins was sure I would never make it to the hospital and said she had a bed ready for me. But I must come from hardy stock and went on to stay with Mel and Jessie Jackson near Spirit River.

Ruth and the girls will not soon forget their trip to the homestead that night. As they skidded and bumped down the canyon hill in the dark, the tongue on Francis' wagon broke. They had a wild ride down the remainder of the hill and into the creek, with the little girls screaming, "We are going to drown". Fortunately Francis was a pretty good teamster and managed to keep everything right side up.

Five weeks later I arrived home with my new baby, riding the last 8 miles on top of the wagon load of seed grain pulled by the old John Deere. Home sure looked good as I climbed stiffly down from my perch about mid-night. Hewsons now had their cabin completed and soon moved into their own home.

For 8 years our home was the house by the side of the road and all the people who homestead further up the line went through our yard. One chilly spring morning we were awakened by the sound of a motor. We looked out of the window to see Bob and Phyllis Lott on their little Ferguson tractor driving into the yard. Phyllis was riding up front astride the hood. Needless to say they were ready for a cup of hot coffee before continuing on to their homestead.

Another incident I wish I had recorded on film was the arrival of Henry and Phyllis Hessler, and baby daughter Barbara, with a team and high-topped buggy. Other arrivals were Fred and Joe Wold, who had come all the way from their home near Bear Lake with the team and wagon. They had brought along a jug of wine, to help pass the time on the tedious journey. Supper, wine and a lot of stories were shared

before they headed up the trail to their homestead later in the evening.

Lack of roads and the awful mud created a great many of the frustrations and hardships of homesteading. As one neighbour said after getting stuck for about the fourth time on a trip to Blueberry Mtn., "I was so cheezed off, I felt like getting down on my knees and drinking that slough dry." However these problems were often cause for laughter. One spring day Francis, Guy Gano and Fred Wold, set out for the store with the team hitched to a two wheeled cart. As they bounced through the hummocks, down on the old Gilligan place there was a very loud bang. Fred disappeared very suddenly and both Francis and Guy thought he had been shot. After getting the team under control and turning back, they found Fred lying on his back in the grass just a bit breathless and looking very surprised. The cart had one flat tire.

During those early years Francis had several encounters with bears but only one involved me. One evening when everyone was asleep, I was surprised to hear running animals and what sounded like a foal whinnying. I knew it couldn't be wild horses so I opened the door to listen. At this instant, Mac, the old dog, who was getting a bit deaf, woke up, rushed down to the creek, gave a few shrill barks, made a choking strangled sound, ran back to the house, in the door and under the boy's bed where he remained until morning. I shook Francis awake and said, "There is a bear in the pig-pen". In a matter of seconds, he was headed for the pig yard with the trusty old 30.06, while I trotted along behind carrying the gas lantern. It was a very dark night. As we climbed the corral fence and held up the lantern all we could see was a thick cloud of dust with a large dark shape moving about in the middle of it. The pig it was trying to kill was still screaming and several other sows, some gilts and the old boar were milling around making a lot of noise.

We walked a bit closer, I held the light above my head and Francis fired. As I peered over his left shoulder Lady Luck must have been sitting on his right. There is no way he could see just where or what he was aiming at but there was a great splash, then silence. Presently the poor pig appeared still able to walk but badly chewed. When we looked over the creek bank all we could see was a small patch of fur and a few bubbles rising to the surface. I said, "Shoot him again, he is still breathing", but I needn't have worried. After butchering the pig we returned to the house where I proceeded to get the worst case of the shakes I ever had in my life.

The next morning we found the "running animals" were our cattle. They had stampeded thru' the fence and we found them about two miles away.

When we pulled the bear out of the creek with the tractor we found it was a huge bear with a beautiful chocolate brown fur. I have never seen another one like him.

A strange aftermath to the tale was the fact that our dog and several pigs were sick the next day. The old dog walked very slowly around the yard with his head down all day and wouldn't eat or drink. The next day he was running at a swift trot in a large circle which brought him thru' the yard at regular intervals. This lasted until mid-afternoon before he stopped, had a drink and laid down to rest. Several of the pigs refused to eat and lay listlessly about. One died and the others eventually recovered. I have never found any answer for this strange behavior.

1959 was rather an eventful year. At long last a graded road was built from Bear Creek into our community and a real bridge on the Bear replaced the little homemade one which washed out every spring. The grade only went a half mile beyond our lane and it was to be another year before there was a culvert on Fourth Creek and gravel on the road. However it was a good start. There was only one drawback, we really missed having the neighbors drop in for coffee as they brought the mail and the latest news on their way home from town or Blueberry.

In the fall Francis bought his first and only brand new tractor, a John Deere diesel 30-10. I don't think anyone nowadays can really understand what a moralebooster this was for Francis. No more hauling drums of gas to the field every day. No more banging old two-cylinder engine, and oh the bliss of power-steering.

In October Francis was hospitalized with a severe case of pneumonia. About a week later, son Kenneth arrived on the scene. At least this was one time that Francis was able to visit me often while I was in the hospital. With the help from several of our good neighbors we finished building our new house in 1960. Tho' there was still much to be done on the interior we moved in on the 10 of December. It was a wonderful improvement on our crowded little log home but we have many happy memories of our eight years spent there.

January 1961 saw the arrival of our daughter Evelyn, the new year's baby in the Spirit River hospital. A few weeks later the neighbours surprised us with a house warming party. They came well prepared with food, drinks and music, as well as a nice gift for us. Everyone danced up a storm until the small hours of the morning. I'm sure our house was thoroughly warmed. 1961 was also the year that saw the end of the old school ponies, buggies and the little van heated by a tiny stove, a link with my past had been broken. September saw the arrival of the yellow

school bus at the end of the lane and I felt that our pioneer days had really come to an end.

In 1962 we bought a power plant and a T.V. Things were really getting modern on the old homestead. As this was one of the first T.V.'s in the district we spent many happy evenings when the neighbours dropped in to watch and we put on the old coffee pot. There seemed to be so many good shows in those days. The arrival of the power north of the creeks in 1965 brought an end to this. However it also brought an end to the harassments of trying to start trucks and tractors in freezing weather. How wonderful to be able to plug them in.

The spring of 1965 saw the last classes leave Fourth Creek School. In the fall the new centralized Savanna School opened its doors. The Fourth Creek School was moved to Savanna but was later sold and is now a work-shop on the Henry Hessler farm.

For some years Francis had been in ailing health and in 1967 saw him resigned to spending his remaining years in a wheelchair. Undaunted, he still drove his truck about the neighbourhood. He was happiest when we loaded him on the tractor and he could get out to work the land. Francis was fond of a poem in an old school book which contained the following lines:

Up! be stirring, be alive
Get upon a farm and thrive!
He's a king upon a throne
Who has acres of his own!

This was the way he felt about the farm right to the end.

In 1967 Peter finished grade twelve and Tom dropped out of school. From then on they took over the work on the farm with the younger children all pitching in to do their share. With Francis to make the decisions, lend a helping hand when possible, and a bit of advice now and then we kept the farm running.



Dolen Family.

After Francis' death in 1972 we were faced with a real challenge. Could we succeed on the farm without Francis at the helm? Wrong decisions proved costly. There were crop losses, stock losses, and Tom's death in a motor accident in 1976. We learned our lessons the hard way tho' and 1980 finds us still holding down the farm.

Twenty-eight years have seen many changes in our community. Some of the original homesteaders have passed on. Some have turned their farms over to the younger generation. Others have sold their farms and we again have new neighbours joining our community. With my first grandchild off to school at Savanna I feel that the wheel has gone full circle.

Pioneering in the Peace country; I wouldn't have missed it for anything!

Neighbours

by A. E. Dolen

The homesteaders got to-gether
at a house just down the road
The teams were tied in the willows
the babes were laid on the bed.
The youngsters were filled with excitement
at the thought of the evening ahead.
To-night we'd forget our troubles
and have a bit of fun
We could hear Ralph tuning his fiddle
the music was soon begun
Herman Hindmarch called the square dance,
and we all joined in with a will
That big log house shook and trembled
but stood squarely on its sills
Waltzes, quadrilles and polkas,
Ralph played on his violin
And tho' we were few in number
We created quite a din
By midnight we were hungry
and ready for a rest
Everyone had brought refreshments
And we all tied in with a zest
By three-thirty in the morning
the sun began to rise
We all gathered up our children
and bade our host good-bye
As we wended our way homeward,
in the early morning dew
We recalled the conversations,
with our neighbours tried and true
Everyone discussed their problems,
mixed with humor and a joke
If you looked into our pockets
you'd have found we all were broke.
All these memories stay with me,
As I travel down the years.

May God-Bless my good neighbours
The Fourth Creek Pioneers

Claude and Olive Fitzpatrick

Claude Fitzpatrick was born in Grande Prairie and Olive was born in Manitoba. They were married in December 1940, in Grande Prairie. Claude and Olive had four children: all were born in Spirit River. The oldest of the four is Mary who was born on January 1st, 1949. Murray, better known as Buzz, was born May 18th, 1951. Danny was born on April 8th, 1953, and Darcy was born August 28th, 1958. Now all are married, and all but Murray have children of their own. Claude and Olive are proud of all their grandchildren: Corry and Leigh, sons of Mary and Doug Cooke, B. J. Galbraith, son of Darcy and Lloyd; Erin, daughter of Dan and Dawn Fitzpatrick.

In December 1964, Claude and Olive and their four children moved to Fourth Creek. In 1969 they got their first three quarters of land from the government. Since then Fitzpatricks have acquired much more land and are continuing to farm. They own horses, and have owned some other small stock.

As in all families there are both happy and sad events. The death of Claude's, as well as Olive's grandparents caused great sadness. Through all the sad times Fitzpatricks stuck together. Claude and Olive have taken trips to some exciting places. In 1944 they went to Halifax to see a family member, and for the first time saw a big circus. They also visited Kelowna a couple of times, and plan to live long and go again.

Dawn and Dan Fitzpatrick

Dan Fitzpatrick was born in the Spirit River Hospital on April 8, 1953. The first school he attended was the Spirit River School, then Dawson Creek, then Grimshaw, and he finally finished his schooling at the Grade Ten level, at Savanna School.

After Dan quit school, he went to work in Grande Prairie for a construction company where he became a cat operator. Dawn Hampton, a local girl from Blueberry Mountain, was also working in Grande Prairie at this time. By chance these two happened to meet, and after a happy relationship they decided to get married, which they did on January 24, 1974. After their marriage they moved to Fort MacMurray where Dan operated a cat. The two lived there for four years.

In 1978, Dan bought five quarter sections of land from Norman Fitzsimmons in the Fourth Creek area. During the summer, fall, and spring Dan worked on his farm, but during the winter months he worked up north on a cat. Dawn in the meantime, was working



Erin's Christening.



"For better or for worse."

at Moonshine Lake all year round. Since they did not have very good living accommodations at the time, they bought an old house and had it moved from Blueberry Creek to their home in Fourth Creek, where they did a complete renovation job on it.

On February 22, 1980 Dawn had a little girl which they named Erin. In the spring of 1980 Dan bought into the South Peace Steel Industries in Rycroft and went to work in the shop. While Dan was working here, his crop was put in and taken off by Doug Fox, his hired man. In August, Dan sold the farm and bought a house in Rycroft where he, his wife Dawn, and daughter Erin live presently. In September, he bought out his partner, and is now the manager of the shop, while his wife Dawn, works with him by keeping the bookwork straight.

Brian and Lana Fjeseth

Brian was born in Kingman, Alberta, a small hamlet fifteen miles from Camrose. His father, Peter, was Norwegian born and his mother, Agnes, was of Swedish descent. Brian came from a farm background and it was always a dream of his to own a farm of his own. He received a Bachelor of Education from the U of A in May of 1967. He taught school from ten years before becoming a full time farmer.

In the winter of 1963, Brian made his first weekend visit to Fourth Creek. Shortly afterward he and his brother Doug filed on land in the area. They contracted Ted and Gus Roose to clear and break the first eighty acres. Brian moved up the first of July, 1965 and lived in a tent while building a granary which was their first home. In 1966 Doug and his

father put in the crop which consisted of 80 acres of barley. Later in the summer Brian and Doug built a twelve by twenty foot house which seemed like a mansion after the granary and tent. That fall, Bob Lott their closest neighbor combined the crop. During the next five years they continued to develop the land with neighbor Henry Hessler doing most of the cat work.

Lana Minue grew up in Okotoks, a small town 20 miles south of Calgary. Her father John was of Irish descent and her mother Karen came from a Scottish background. She arrived at Savanna School in September of 1967 having been hired to teach grade one. The people were friendly, hardworking and most interested in the progress of their children. Her first home was a comfortable teacherage which amazingly had once been a barn and then a school. The staff at that time consisted of Renee Joly, Principal and grade seven, eight and nine teacher; Desmond Kerr, grade five and six teacher; Hubert Sinclair who handled grade three and four; Viola Croker with grade two and three and Lana Minue with grade one. Leona Ritchie supervised high school correspondence, Helen Joly was secretary and John and Maggie Rinke were janitors. We were a very close staff — best friends as well as working colleagues. At that time our library consisted of two or three shelves in the janitors storeroom. The staff



Threshing crew, 1980.

room doubled as the infirmary. The roads were terrible in the spring and we always missed some school because the buses just couldn't make their runs.

In August of 1970 Brian and Lana were married having met while teaching at Savanna School. Our first year of marriage proved to be an interesting one. That fall we lived on the farm. Every morning we took the tractor to our nearest neighbors and the car the rest of the way to school. We had no road, no power, no sewer and only running for water. This was quite a change for a girl who had been raised in town. During the winter we stayed in a teacherage and came out on weekends to work on our new home. It was a busy time but a very pleasant one too. We made friends as a couple, Bob and Phyllis Lott, Henry and Phyllis Hessler and Gus and Connie Roose, who have made our homestead years ones of pure joy.

In the spring of 1973, we purchased our first thirteen heifers. Today we try to maintain a herd of approximately 25 cows. Our menagerie also includes horses, pigs, chickens, cats, and a dog. Between the years of 1970-78 Brian built a house, barn, combination shop and garage, chicken house, chop house, corrals, cattle shed and granaries. Neither of us would change our way of life or our place of residence for anyone. Fourth Creek has been very good to us!

Some Homestead Memories

(1) Before we had an arena, skating parties were a prime source of entertainment. Brian, despite everyones misgivings decided to clean off a dugout with our John Deere. Of course he broke through the ice and had one heck of a time getting it out. To this day people still inquire about our "Green Submarine."

(2) One day Brian and I decided to make him a pair of pants. Because I am such a rotten seamstress, my role was purely advisory. We pinned the pattern and proceeded with the cutting out. Things were

going very well and soon we had the leg seams sewn in. That was when we discovered that there were two right legs and no left. We tore out the seams of the one leg, Brian sewed on some more material to the resulting piece and proceeded to re-cut. Unfortunately there were now two seams in the left leg but we passed on the next steps. Soon it was time to pin on the back pockets. This I did while Brian took a break. He took special care sewing these on, backstitching all the corners. It was then we discovered that they were going to meet at the center seam and had to be moved. By the time we pried them off we had two holes which Brian had to zig-zag over. During the process of finishing up we accidentally sewed one of the pockets shut and had to rip that out. Brian said he could never have managed without my valuable advice. Believe it or not those were one of his favourite pair of pants and he finally wore them out.

(3) Bears have been frequent visitors to our farm. They have woken us up by scratching on the bedroom screen, looked in on us through the picture window and checked out our garbage cans. Over the years we



Fourth Creek Ball Club.

have only had to destroy two as most have been discouraged by shooting over their heads.

(4) One morning in late spring, Brian called me out to see a cow moose that was standing at our road gate. Much to our surprise she lay down and settled in for the day. Finally we realized she was calving and went on with our own work, mowing lawn, gardening, etc. Every once in a while she would raise her head and wiggle her ears at us in what seemed a friendly relaxed way. About five that afternoon a very wobbly little calf was standing by her side and

soon after that they were gone. We often talk of this incident and how lucky we are to live so close to and in harmony with nature. •

Talbert and Alvine Foshaug

Talbert's father was Norwegian, his mother Swedish. Talbert was born at Tofield, Alberta. I was born in North Dakota, of Norwegian origin. We decided to homestead because we thought it was a good way of getting cheap new land.

Talbert was the third one to file on the land draw they had at Spirit River, in the spring of '51. He filed on the E. ½-14-81-9-W6. The roads were impossible to drive on, so Stanley Haugseth and Talbert borrowed horses from Jackson and one saddle, then a second saddle from Roy Collins. They rode up to look the land over, and could see the whole countryside over the tree tops.

Most of our difficulties were the roads. It took all the gas we had planned to use for breaking up land, just to reach the homestead. In the fall of '51 it was dry enough so they drove right up to the north end of Herman's land and broke up some furrows.

Talbert, Herman, and Nelius Haugland went up the homestead in the spring of '52 (likely after the crops were put in at La Glace). They planned to do some land breaking, but it started to rain and kept raining till they ran out of food, so they headed for home. They got to the canyon and the creek was so high they couldn't drive across. Rempels from Silver Valley were on the other side, so they got Rempels to throw one end of a rope across to them. They tied this to the wagon and got Rempels to fasten the other end of the rope to their tractor. The tractor was to pull them across, but as soon as they hit the water, the wagon rolled and everything went into the creek. They finally got a hold of the wagon, but lost everything else. Nelius went right under but he got a hold of the wagon too. Just when they got to the other side, the king pin fell out, so the back part of the wagon

started down the creek. Talbert had to jump back in, and he caught it before it got too far, so they still had the wagon. They had a vehicle on this side, so they made it home. Their clothes were washed many times before all the silt came out of them.

We moved up to stay in June '53. Talbert had started a house, so we got it finished enough to move into before fall. In the meantime we lived in a granary.

One day Talbert was working on the land north of the house when a bear came and tried to get into our chicken house. The dog would chase it away from the house, and the bear would chase the dog away from the chicken house. This kept on all afternoon, until just before Talbert came home for supper. The bear had spotted a granary he was trying to get into when Talbert shot him.

We moved back to La Glace in 1964. Judy, our oldest is 28 now, and lives in Grande Prairie. She is Mrs. Gordon Glenn, and they have a little boy. Roger is 25, and drives a truck. Right now he is working at Slave Lake. Bryce 21, works for Wayne Lock on Rig maintenance.



Bridge at Bear Creek.

Family Heritage Fredland Family

Peter Fredland, born in 1900 in Norway, came to Canada, from Norway in 1908 with his parents, his sister, and his brother. He lived in Bardo, Alberta, for one year, then the whole family moved to Bella-Coola, B.C. and lived there for nine years. On July 27, 1918, he arrived in Sexsmith. The family got established on a homestead in La Glace just before the Christmas of 1918. Peter helped farm his dad's homestead and later purchased it.

In 1931, Peter married Asbjorg Haakstead. She came from Norway with her folks in 1928. Her family homesteaded the land next to Peter's place.

Peter wrote a strange and coincidental story about



Talbert and his fuel supply.



Peter and Asbjorg Fredland.

the Model T Days: "My brother Johnnie acquired a Model T as an inducement to his girl friend and they soon got married. I bought it from Johnnie, and it worked the same for me, for I soon got married to Asbjorg. Then I sold it to Alvin Bangen, and the same thing happened to him."

Peter and Asbjorg had five children. Cynthia married Mel Parker; they presently live in Sexsmith. Lorene married Bob Paul; they are farming in Fourth Creek. Brian married Bonnie Munro; they too are farming in Fourth Creek. Janet married Glen Wyant; they also are farming in Fourth Creek. And Wilfred married Serene Larson, and they (my mother and father) also farm in Fourth Creek.

Many years after having their children, Peter sold his land in La Glace and acquired new land in Fourth Creek.

Peter and Asbjorg often went back to visit their friends in La Glace. They also made one trip back to Norway.

Peter Fredland passed away on October 3, 1977, leaving Wilfred and Brian to carry on the family name.

Asbjorg passed away March 1981.

Wilfred, my father, was born in Sexsmith. He stayed with his family in La Glace until he was out of school. He then worked at various jobs in the Grande Prairie area.

In 1960 Wilfred married Serene Larson, and a



P. Fredland Family.

year later they moved to the Fourth Creek area and took up a homestead.

In 1961 Darrel was born, in 1964 I, Travis, was born.

Dad farmed in the dry seasons and in the winter we moved to the area of Bear Lake, B.C., where Dad drove a logging truck.

Brian also acquired land in the same area. He and Bonnie had three children, Evan born in 1964, and the twins, Keith and Carolyn born in 1966.



Wilfred Fredland Family.

Dad and Brian played for many years with the Fourth Creek Flyers. Dad played back-catcher and Brian played first-base. The team won the trophy for its league so many times in a row that it was finally just given to them. The players and positions are as follows: Back-catcher — Wilfred Fredland, pitcher — Brian Fjeseth and Dennis Rude, 1st Base — Brian Fredland, 2nd Base — Herman Haugland, Short Stop — Nolan Risvold, 3rd Base — Gus Roose, Right Field — Woody Schultz. Center Field — Jim Hindmarch, Left Field — Matt Zeyha.

Mom and Dad carried on farming until my brother and I were old enough to help. They are still farming to this date. My brother, Darrell, is now working in Fort St. John, B.C. I am still in school.

There are presently six boys carrying the Fredland name and to hopefully carry on that name.

Guy and Alice Gano and Family

"The Loop of the Peace River Country" — 1952-1966 (taken from Mrs. Gano's diary). It's like a horseshoe, this vast area of the Peace River Country in Alberta, which has opened up within the last 12 years. I'm beginning to believe the people are realizing what a great area it really is. It will be 28 years this July 1980 since "Francis Dolen and Guy Gano" came here, and we were a few of the first who pushed our way in.

When our husbands filed, they went to Edmonton and filed blind, not knowing where their homesteads would be. This was in June of '52, and a few weeks later they came north to find their land. With no success, and everything under water, they turned back as far as Blueberry Mountain where they met Mike Testawich, who knew the country and brought them in by team. Guy and Francis were satisfied with



Guy and children 1954.

their locations, and came back to Cochrane, Alberta. There they loaded a tractor, plow, etc., and a "power washer", came back to the homestead, did some breaking and built a log house 14ft.x16ft. They each bought a horse and used them together, then they came back to Cochrane in July of '52 for their wives, who each had two children. Ours were school age, so had to take correspondence, and the Dolen boys, Peter and Tom were preschoolers.

We brought all our furniture and personal things — we were here to stay. That July the days were terribly hot, 90° F. We would have to shut down breaking as the tractor would boil, and all we did those hot days was sit in the shade and eat. To get out to the store, 18 miles was an effort. The men would take both tractor and truck, (in case of getting stuck), or the team, to get through the mud holes. It was mud and water for miles. When they went to Spirit River they would leave about 8 a.m. and would not get back till midnight.

For five years we lived off the land, with produce from our gardens, canned moose and wild canned fruit. Our income was very small, and most of the money would go for gas and oil, etc., for breaking and clearing. In the fall the men went out to Blueberry on a stooking job at Dick Jackson's. We needed a little cash to get out in the fall. We women and the children stayed at the homestead, and we really felt alone and far away for the first time. All that would be company was an old moose, a hoot owl that stayed up all night, and a most unwelcome woodpecker, which would peck regularly at 7 a.m. on the stovepipe; he served as our alarm clock. We never had any visit from the bears, although one night when the children and I had gone to bed (we slept in a tent and ate in the house) about 10:00 o'clock I was sure there was a bear outside. I woke the children up, gathered up my blankets, got out of the tent and knocked on Alma's door saying "I'm moving in". Alma and her two boys were sleeping in the house alone. She just said, "I'm glad to see you" and the rest of the night was spent sleeping on the floor, while a mouse or two would race by. There were so many rabbits that year they would thump around the tent all night.

The end of September (28th) the temperature went down to freezing so we all agreed (and were happy to) to go out for the winter. We went to Cold Lake, Alberta where my dad lived. The Dolens went back to Cochrane. When spring came in 1953 we were all anxious to get back to the homestead. Our funds were still small, but co-operation saw us through. The neighbors helped us, and we helped them, and that way there was no money to exchange. In a short time more and more families moved in.

For recreation we would hold dances in our homes, and a good time was had by all. The orchestra consisted of a violin and guitar. In July we held a picnic in the pasture of one of the neighbors, and some outsiders from Blueberry and Sexsmith would come. Everyone would donate food, etc. They were good times and everyone seemed happy.

The school came — the first meeting was held in our house, and we had to decide what to name the school, so it was decided to name it Fourth Creek, as this was the fourth creek north of Hamlin Creek. When the one room school was finished we held our dances and card parties there, and were able to have larger orchestras: “The Western Aces” was one. Each family took turns putting on card parties (with \$1.00 prizes). The families increased, so that meant a larger school. Another room was added on, then came better roads with gravel, and more land opened up. The young people grew up and married; some left and some stayed in. Things began to come alive; a community hall, a larger 4 room school, this time in Savanna with 100 students, and 3 school buses put in use.

My husband and I did the first enumerating in the district in 1962, and it consisted of 39 voters. The third list was done with the help of Elsie Rude.

We have since retired to Cochrane, leaving our children still in the north, but we return often to visit them and neighbors, and to review the many changes that take place every year.



Homesteading in 1953. (More photos on page 104.)

The David Hagerman Family told by Gwen

Early in 1977, David, Gwen, three year old Brian, and year old Christine Hagerman left all their familiar surroundings and friends, and moved north to Blueberry Mountain. They sold everything they had acquired, except vehicles, furniture, and treasures; bought a second hand mobile home, and went

farming. Home was now a hole in the ever present bush, and six quarters of land.

Gwen had been brought up a city girl, and found it very exciting being so free. She found lots of work to keep her happy and fit. The children grew fine and strong. Harvest came, and Gwen and David worked night and day. They finished in good time and did up the fall work, then they went to work building their home. They built it 16' x 41' and used it alongside the trailer as a recreation room. All this time they lived on Bob and Pat Hagerman's (David's mother and dad), as there wasn't a good road or power to their own land. David hauled water all this time, and conservation began to play a large part in their lives.

In the summer of 1978, after the crop was seeded, David and Gwen decided to move down to their own land, so they pulled the trailer down into another clearing in the bush. This time they had a good road and power. Now they both went to work cleaning up their yard, and all too soon it was their second harvest.

A fine stand of trees came down the summer of 1978 to make way for the dugout. This also was the fall David showed Gwen how to operate their tractor, a Massey 1100. She was thrilled, and spent many hours just turning stubble to black.

Winter came again, and David went to work in Grande Prairie. Brian was in kindergarten, so Gwen decided to go to the big city only for a month at Christmas. After that she came back and loved the lovely Jack Frost creations.

In the spring of 1979 the foursome moved into their own house they had all helped build, and sold the mobile. They took off an excellent crop of barley that fall, with the result that David hoped not to have to go out to work.



Dave Hagerman Trailer.

Nelius Haugland Family

as told by Nelius

Nelius came to this area from La Glace, Alberta. His father, Sigurd Haugland, had emigrated from Norway and homesteaded there in 1914. His mother, Inga, also of Norwegian parents was born at Tofield, Alta. and moved to La Glace with her parents.

Nelius filed on land E ½ — 28-81-8 in 1951. As he said, "I was looking for land to farm and there was none to be had around home so along with several others, we filed on land in the Blueberry Mtn.-Fourth Creek area."

In the summer of '52, Irwin Carlson, who had the west half of the same section and I, hired Lloyd Bekkerus of La Glace to break a 20 acre piece for each of us with his breaking outfit. In the spring of '53 we purchased a model "D" John Deere tractor and I traded my Dodge car for a tiller with a seed box on and that's what we put our first crop in with.

The first two or three years, I didn't spend much time on the homestead, I was working for wages to get money to do more improving. When I was in here working, I stayed with Irwin and Elsie Rude as I had no buildings. In the summer of 1953 I worked in Spirit River putting in water and sewer lines with Oiland Construction, and it was there I met a good looking red head, who was a waitress in the cafe where we ate.



Family, 1960.

In the spring of 1955, being tired of doing my own cooking, I decided to ask this young lady to marry me. She was one of those that can't say "NO", so in July we were married and I got my cook and bed warmer. Her name was Marilyn Sands, daughter of Art and Lenice Sands from Happy Valley area. We moved to the homestead, after a short honeymoon, to make it our home.

We had many tough but interesting trips in and out of here the first years. There were too many to mention all here, but I'd like to tell of one. It was in the spring, when Alex Hutchinson, Talbert Foshaug, my brother Herman and I spent about 28 hours from Jack Birds store to Talbert's, which was about 11 miles. We were bringing in our seed, fuel and grub. We had two 3 ton trucks, 2 tractors and 2 wagons. We talk about bad roads now but our road at that time was actually a ditch. It was a trail the oil company put in, in the winter. They had just used a bulldozer and pushed the trees and top soil to the sides which made more of a ditch than a road in the summertime. There were long stretches where we couldn't see the front tires on the tractors, as they were covered with water. We depended a lot on our neighbors to get our supplies when they went shopping and we would do the same for them.

Roy Collins lived at the end of the good road. Many times vehicles were exchanged and left there so we would carry on our way with tractors. We had very good neighbors, everyone was willing to help the other out. There was lots of visiting and playing cards in those days.

The Fourth Creek school was built in 1955, and was our meeting place for card parties and dances, (not to mention the house parties in every newly built



Family growing up.

house and even a barn dance in Dolen's new barn). Good times were had by all. Visiting slowed down quite a bit after we got power and television. The first sets in the area, run on light plants, drew good crowds to the few homes that had them.

In 1957 our family started to grow. May 22, our first son Stanley was born. Marilyn had gone to stay at her folks about the first of April and what a trip we had to get out. We had four big horses and a rubber tired wagon and set out across country to the other side of Bear Creek where a ride was waiting for her. There was mud and water all over and I didn't think we'd ever make it up the creek as the mud was rolling up so bad on the tires of the wagon. The poor horses really had a pull, it was a good thing it wasn't a rush trip.

March 28, 1959 our first daughter, Sheryl was born. Again Marilyn went out early, as our roads and vehicles were still not very dependable. After that we started getting more roads built, but when we were expecting our third baby, it started to rain, so out to town Marilyn went again. Our daughter Lynn was born June 30, 1960. It had rained so much then the water was running across the roads in many places, so our grade was full of washouts.

On September 26, 1961 our fourth child, a son Lorne was born. This rounded out our family. We have all tried to take an active part in the community and school activities. I have always played ball, first with the Happy Valley team as there wasn't enough for a team here, a few other men played there too. I have played here since then except for the past couple of years, I've helped with the coaching.

We have belonged to the Fourth Creek Community Association since it started, and Marilyn belongs

to the Ladies Club. The last few years we've had our community curling rink, so we have all had a hand at that. We enjoy taking part in the community activities, but find there is getting to be less community spirit all the time so its hard to keep things going.

Our family is all on their own now and we are very happy with them. Stanley is a backhoe operator in Grande Prairie, Sheryl is there working as an accounting Sec. and Lynn is also in Grande Prairie as a dental assistant. Lorne is working from home and is apprenticing in carpentry. We have a lovely little grand-daughter, Michelle who we are always happy to see.

July 12, 1980 we celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary. It was great to have so many friends, neighbors, relatives with us to celebrate. They even had a mock wedding which was hilarious. Our children did most of the arranging and with help from our neighbors and all, made it a very special day in our life in this community.

As for us, we would soon like to retire a bit from the hard work on the farm and do some travelling and other things that we haven't been able to do in the past.

The History of Henry and Phyllis Hessler

On June 23, 1953, Henry William Hessler filed on a homestead in Fourth Creek (S½ 18-82-7-W6). His future bride also took up land (E½ 6-82-7-W6).

On October 18, 1953, Henry married Phyllis Anne Sather of Wanham, Alberta. In 1954 the young couple moved to Henry's homestead and started clearing land. On June 9, 1954, their first child — Barbara Margaret — was born. In July they set up housekeeping in an 8 x 16 bunkhouse. With the help of his father and brothers, Henry cleared and broke 65 acres. Equipment used was an LA Case Tractor on steel wheels, a homemade steel brushcutter and a



Twenty-fifth Anniversary.



Moving to Fourth Creek.

piller which was made of wooden planking on a metal frame. The breaking plow was a single-bottom Cockshutt.

Travelling was primitive - in a modern way. The Hesslers had a small Ferguson tractor. A box was built on the three-point hitch and when the family went visiting, Phyllis sat on a seat in this box holding infant Barbara, while Henry drove the tractor. It often took more than one day to reach Spirit River, although less than half the journey was made by tractor. When they reached the DeBolt settlement they jumped into their pick-up truck and drove in "comfort" for the remainder of the trip.

Since their homestead shack was not winterized, Henry and Phyllis moved out for the winter for the first four years. In 1954 and 1955 they moved to Spirit River where Phyllis taught school. Henry went to work driving a cat.

In the spring of 1956 they moved to Wanham until their first son Kenneth Wayne was born on April 10, 1956. Back on the homestead the family of four moved into their "big" shack. It had doubled in size when Henry built an 8 x 16 lean-to onto the original bunkhouse.

1956 was a busy summer; the second crop had been planted and more land was cleared. In the fall, harvesting was done with a threshing machine owned by Joe Wold and the Hewson brothers. Barley yielded very well and they were able to haul a carload of malting barley to the elevator. After harvest Henry and Phyllis again moved to Wanham for the winter. On April 24, 1957 their second son Alan William Hessler was born.

In October 1957 the family moved out for their final winter away from Fourth Creek. A new house had been started on SW $\frac{1}{4}$ 18-82-7. In 1958 the Hesslers moved into their new home. They are still living in this house. In the fall of 1958 a road was built to Joe Wold's corner (over 3 miles away). Civilization at last!



Hessler Homestead Equipment.

In 1959 the Hesslers bought an old Cockshutt combine and Henry went custom combining. On Sept. 15, 1959, he was combining for Roman Yanishewski on W $\frac{1}{2}$ 36-81-8 when Phyllis packed up the three kids and drove to Yanishewskis. Henry jumped off the combine and rushed into Spirit River. Calvin Reed was born at 6:30 that evening. It was a good thing they made it in time because there were no midwives in Fourth Creek.

In 1960 Phyllis began teaching Barbara Grade One by Correspondence. The Fourth Creek School was seven miles away and Barb had no way to get there. In 1961 she was able to begin her regular schooling via school bus. Roads were really a problem then because the bus couldn't come to Hesslers regularly until the last three miles of road were completed.

On August 28, 1962, Laurie Grace was born. This was a year of great progress on the homestead. The Hesslers bought a light plant and TV became available. Ken and Barb attended Fourth Creek School — now expanded to two rooms and later to three.

In the fall of 1965 Calvin began school in the new Savanna School. This was located 19 miles away so the three kids had a long bus ride — 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. — and a long day away from home.

This was the end of the homestead era. Henry and Phyllis obtained title to their land and finished clear-



Hessler Family.

ing their section. Canadian Utilities built a power line into Fourth Creek — Silver Valley, gas lamps and wood stoves gradually disappeared from the districts and running water was installed in the Hessler home.

In 1972, phones came in and Rural Route Mail was established.

Update:

1972 — Barb graduated from Wanham School, moved to Grande Prairie and found a job.

Ken left home to apprentice for a mechanic.

1975 — Alan graduated from Grand Prairie Composite High School then worked in Fairview on the new hospital.

June 7, Barb married John Winia.

1976 — Calvin left school to work in Red Deer.

June 4, Henry and Phyllis became grandparents when Barb and John Winia had a son named Darren John Peter.

1977 — April 2, Alan married Bonnie Craik.

1978 — July 29, Ken married Laura Moravec.

1979 — August 22, Hesslers' second grandchild was born to Barb and John Winia. Her name is Lisa Ann.

1980 — March 15, Calvin married Donna Frank.

June 20, Laurie graduated from Savanna School.

October 10, a third grandchild was born to Alan and Bonnie. His name is Ryan William Hessler.

This brings the Hessler family's history up to date.

January, 1981.

Written by:

Phyllis and Laurie Hessler.



Lassiter Project — Silver Valley.



Lassiter Crew; Tony Bilinski, Ernie Judge, Bernie Archer.



Clearing Land — Lassiter.

Herman Hindmarch Family

I was born at Carlisle, Saskatchewan, in 1912. When I was 21 I went north to Nipawin and homesteaded there for 14 years. It was at Nipawin that I met and married Edna Van Meter in 1940. Our son James (Jim) was born in 1942 and our daughter Margery in 1943. My wife Edna passed away on August 29, 1944.

In 1947 the children and I moved to Alberta and spent 3 years at Edmonton. In 1950 a friend of mine said he was going to Grande Prairie and I decided to go with him. For awhile I drove a dray wagon, then went to work on a planer mill at Clairmont. I stayed there until the end of June when the children were out of school. I had read an advertisement in the paper about then, announcing that homestead land was available in the Fourth Creek area. I applied and in 1951 secured my half section of land for \$5.00, with the stipulation that I complete my homestead duties and give a share of the crop to the government for 10 years. (After 5 years, we were able to purchase the lease outright). The legal description of my homestead was West half of 23-81-8.

During the summer months while the children

were out of school we moved to the homestead and began to clear the land. The only machinery I had was a D-C Case tractor, a 4½ foot tiller and 30 feet of flex harrows. Later when I needed a breaking plow I was able to exchange machinery with Charlie Durant who owned one. The following year my brother Ralph came to Fourth Creek and he had a seed drill so we made out OK.

That first summer I put a ridge pole on my hayrack and dropped a canvas over it, installed our meagre household effects within and we moved into our new home! I had made sure it was mosquito proof when needed so we were actually very comfortable. That fall we moved to Blueberry Mountain and worked during the harvest for Geo. Esselink, staying on to do the chores while they were away that winter. The children went to school from there. The next two summers we went back to the homestead. We never wanted to leave in the fall but there was no water for the stock, so we had no choice. By that time I had a sow with 13 piglets, 1 cow, a calf and 3 horses.

The second winter I had a dug-out made so the water situation eased and the following June we moved back to stay. It was pretty isolated in the early years but we never seemed to be lonely (guess we were too busy). It was good to have a place to raise the children without too many complications, and they took to the farm like fish to water. They took lessons by correspondence and two of the early teachers were Miss Vivian Haugland and Mrs. Evelyn Lambert.

By 1954 there were five families in the district and it wasn't long before we began to create our own amusements. We had card games, ball games and even dances amongst ourselves. The school was built in 1955 and after that we used it for our gathering place.

In the early years we used to ride horseback a lot. One day we decided to visit the Gano's; to get there we had to cross a creek that had a fair amount of water in it and 2 of the horses refused to cross. Margery was on "Babe" and she was an obedient and sensible horse so I slipped off my mount, got a hold of both sides of Babe's bridle, stepped backwards into the creek and started to lead her in, knowing that if she were to go the other 2 horses would follow. Well she was almost too obedient and as she came toward me stepped right on my instep. Fearing it was broken I pushed back on the bridle as hard as I could. That put the mare into a deep hole and Margery was unseated, and landed in the water. She was in no danger, and didn't get hurt, but she came up out of that water just a fuming — I've never seen a 9 year old get that furious! I still have to laugh when I think of it. We had very little illness but we did have some incidents that weren't too funny.

One night when we got back to the homestead I was completely exhausted from having to contend with almost unbelievable road conditions. There was mud everywhere and many times I had to stop and corduroy before we could go on. I was so tired when we finally got home that I asked Jim to tether out the horses. I should have checked on them later but didn't. It turned out that Jim hadn't driven the stakes far enough into the ground and next morning the horses were gone. I guess I wasn't a tracker because I couldn't find any sign of them, I knew I had to find them, so I took the kids on the tractor and started to back-track. About 6 miles from home there was a creek to ford, I eased the tractor into the water but was appalled to feel it slide sideways into a hole and settle on its side. Luckily none of us were hurt and I got the kids out of the water and up onto the creek bank as quickly as I could.

I had to get Dave Ross to come out from Spirit River with his winch truck to pull it out. It was an awful mess and took pretty well all the cash I had to get it cleaned up and running again — I was a pretty sick guy about then. Next morning I took the children and the cow and calf to the Dick Jacksons at Blueberry and asked them if they would keep them until I found the horses. Although they were strangers to me they obligingly agreed.

I met Clayton Schoffner and went home with him, then crossed the creek from his place, scouring the hills for the horses as I went. Suddenly at the edge of an open place I saw 2 white tails swishing rapidly back and forth in an effort to dislodge the hordes of mosquitoes and I knew I had found them. By evening I had them safely home again. It scared me to realize how easily I could have missed them.

In 1960, when Jim was 18 he also took up a homestead, the west ½ of 21, and in 1964 he married Audrey Hamilton from Spirit River. They have three children, Clifford born in '65, Loretta in '67 and Carol in '72, still living on the farm.

Margery is married and is presently living in Dawson Creek. She has 2 daughters, Caroline born in '62 and Barbara in '63, and a son Corey in 1969. As for me, I sold my farm to Grant Jack in 1976 and am now retired and living in Grande Prairie.

On May 5th, 1979 I married Mabel Roberts. We are now living in an apartment in James Manor. We are doing quite a bit of travelling and are enjoying our retirement years immensely.

John and Carole Hurd

We left Langley, B.C., in the summer of 1974 to get away from the rat race of urban living. In September of that year we moved onto the W ½-36-82-8-W.6, in time to harvest our first crop which we had

purchased with the land from Godfrey Thomas. Mr. Thomas homesteaded this half section. Sherry was 4 years old, and Bryant was 18 months.

Our trip from the coast was rather eventful. After purchasing the property we returned to Langley to buy a used truck to move our belongings. John drove this truck and I followed in our since discarded station wagon with Bry. and Sher. John's companion was our dog Freshie. All went well until we hit Spences Bridge, still 640 miles from our new home. There the rear end went on the truck, and after a fruitless search of the surrounding area for parts, we all continued on our way in the station wagon; John, Carole, Sherry, Bryant and Freshie.

We left the truck in the parking lot of a garage and hoped that everything would still be there when we returned for it. We stopped at every small town along the way looking for truck parts. During the night we met rain and mud, and at every coffee stop Freshie baled out with us, to return to the rear of the station wagon along with the kids. In the back was a mattress, sleeping bags, and white cased pillows which were soon autographed with the compliments of Freshie.

West of Chetwynd we met snow, and being bone tired pulled off the road to get some sleep, but sitting upright in a rapidly cooling car isn't very restful. After about 30 hours on the road, we finally arrived home.

A rear end was located at Herman Toews, and John and Phil Martin made the trip back to Spences Bridge to bring home our still intact belongings. After harvest John pushed Godfrey's original shack to the end of the 2 room house we had moved into, to give us additional room.



First Buildings.

Our first winter, Armand Cyr cut and piled 160 acres for us. In the spring of 1975 my youngest brother Tom came to help put in our rape crop. Joe Plantinga turned under the same crop in July because we didn't get enough moisture for germination.

We acquired our first milk cow, and with determination and tears of frustration and pain, I learned to milk. Being a greenhorn I didn't fully realize that milking a cow shouldn't be such a painful experience. After waking each morning with numb hands and arms for over two weeks, I finally toughened up enough to handle the job. The cow gave about 3 gallons at each milking, but unfortunately she had two damaged quarters that made it difficult to get more than a very thin stream of milk, thus prolonging the chore. About the same time we bought our first sows and six feeder hogs from Phil Martin.

In June Alberta Power put in a half mile of power poles to hook up to power, after being without it for 9 months. The difference between this and hooking up to an already existing line in B.C., was about \$2,-500.00.

John had open heart surgery in July and spent many weeks recuperating. He had picked up an infection during our first winter, which damaged an aortic valve. The winter of '75/'76 John and Phil Martin did some logging. John was sufficiently healed by this time to tackle anything he'd ever done before.

In the spring our cow calved, our pigs farrowed, and the crops and garden flourished. John built another granary with expectations of a good harvest. The only cloud in the horizon this year was black, well muscled, and furry. A bear raided our barn and departed with our first calf.

In the winter of '76/'77 John logged again, this time with Gilles Plantinga. In the spring Joe Plan-



J. Hurd at Woodpile.

tinga sawed the logs into lumber. The spring of '77 proved too wet to seed crops. Frank Van den Dungan dug us a new dugout in 1978. The summer was dry and our rain arrived in the fall after swathing. Grain sprouted in the swath, making final grain in the bin meagre. John spent some time this winter working at Blueberry Co-op. mill skidding logs.

In '79 we acquired a half section homestead and purchased the E ½ of section 36 from Gordon Clelland who originally homesteaded the piece. The crop was seeded and doing well, but on July 28th we were blessed with hail. The garden and flowers recovered fairly well, but the damage had been done to the crop.

In desperation John went to work for Shell Canada, checking gravel and helping to build a gas plant north of us. It kept bread on the table and helped pay off accumulating bills. We also managed to have our lumber planed, and to dig in water lines.

It is now 1980 and things are going well. Some of our friends and relatives think we are a bit nuts, but even with all the hardships we have enjoyed our few years here. The climate is vastly different from the lower mainland of B.C. We like the serenity, the wildlife, the numerous birds and lovely wild flowers. We appreciate our friendly neighbours; neighbours who are always ready with a helping hand when you need it most. Even strangers wave to you in passing. Where we came from, you often didn't know the neighbour whose yard bordered yours. Little incidents, while maybe not always amusing to the recipient at the time, help to make life enjoyable.

The Keddie Family by Sarah Keddie

Eric Keddie was born in Liverpool, England, on June 2, 1942. He spent his childhood years in Liverpool and at the age of 18 he left to join the Royal Air Force. He worked first as a Radar Mechanic and was stationed in Sheffield, England. It was in Sheffield that he met Christine Greenwood, who was employed at a cigarette company at the time! In fact it was one year later that they were in a contented wedlock. After they were married, Eric worked as a Russian linguist in Berlin, Germany.

It was in the British Military Hospital, in Berlin, that a baby girl was born into the Keddie family. Sarah Jane Keddie arrived during a blustery blizzard, on February 16, 1965. After Eric left the R.A.F., he went to the Nottingham Teachers' Training College, where he studied intently the subjects Russian and History. Whilst he was there, he went on a student-teacher exchange with the Moscow and Leningrad Universities. In fact he took several courses while he was there.

After he graduated from the Nottingham Teach-

ers Training College, he got the wanderlust once more. This time he decided to move to the wilderness and grandeur of Canada! LacLaBiche was first on the agenda. It was in LacLaBiche, that Corenna Marie Keddie came along. After four years of living in LacLaBiche, the Keddies moved once again, this time to Athabasca. It was in Athabasca that the birth of Colin Fergus Keddie occurred. He arrived on May 9, 1976 — Mother's Day that year. After three years in Athabasca, we decided, after a quick visit to Fourth Creek, to move there.

The first time anyone in our family set eyes upon Fourth Creek, was on April 5, 1976. Our first impression of this vast area was one of awe. It took a long time for any of us to find our way around in the intricate maze of roads. Our family moved to Savanna in the summer of 1976, and lived in trailer #21, just behind the school. We purchased a farm, but still had no house of any kind in which to live. When we finally got our house, it was in the summer of 1978, but we didn't get it the usual way. We bought our house from a farm 8 miles east of Rycroft, and had it moved all the way to our farm, approximately 50 miles away.

We moved into the house in November of that same year. Our dugout had no water in it so we had to pump water into it from another water supply.

In both of the summers that we have lived in Fourth Creek we haven't farmed our own land! Instead we rent it to our nearest neighbours.

In October of 1978 a surprise came into our family. Samantha Delilah, a foster baby, was brought to our loving care.

During February of that same year a disaster struck the family. Eric's stepmother died. Eric flew over to Wales immediately to attend the funeral.

The most precious memory any of the Keddie family hold of the Fourth Creek area, is the memory of Jessica Winnifred Keddie. Jessica was born on November 7, 1979. She is just as beautiful as the view that we can see just outside the windows of our house — the view of the Josephine and Bear Creeks joining into one magnificent coulee and continuing on to the Peace River Valley!

John Laninga Family

I was born in 1945 and grew up in Grande Prairie. All my life, I enjoyed working with animals and gardening. During my high school years, I decided I wanted to go farming, but as I was a high school teachers' son, I had no farm to take over. Buying a farm seemed out of the question, so I settled for a homestead. In 1962, Dad and my brother Ken filed on Section 31 82 8 W6. In 1964, the year after graduation, I filed on N½ (half) 11-83-8-W6. The



John Laninga Wedding.

next two years, I worked on the homestead during the summer and spent two very worthwhile winters at the Fairview Agricultural College. That was a must for a city boy. During the summer, the Plantinga brothers coached me along. With financial help and encouragement from my parents, I struggled along.

My first summer here was very wet and we had no roads so I didn't get much accomplished. Finally in 1966, I put in our first crop, a quarter of wheat. We were really thrilled with it, but on the twelfth of August we got a hard frost. We eventually harvested that crop standing in a foot of snow in November and needless to say got very little. The next year was a bit better, but in 1968 another hard frost hit our 500 acres of crop and reduced 270 acres of wheat to nothing. That was just about enough to make me change occupations.

By about 1969, I'd had enough of baching in the summer and the oil patch in the winter so went wife



Breaking, 1966.



No Roads.

hunting. That August, I met Diana Richie from Silver Valley; just 18 miles away. (Her family moved out here the same year I did.) Two years later, we were married in Munro Presbyterian Church at Blueberry Mtn. After a short honeymoon, we moved into a shack on the NW 31 82 8 W6. On July 13, 1973 our first son, Beno John, was born followed by Lisa Leona on April 15, 1975 and then Edward James (Teddy) on February 21, 1977. By the time Teddy came along, our shack just couldn't hold us anymore, so that fall we moved into our new house just west of the old one. We sure appreciated all the space.

Since we've been married, we've had livestock pretty well all the time. First a flock of sheep but when coyotes ate the profits, we sold them and went into cattle.

I never have any regrets about doing what all my school friends thought was insanity . . . a city kid moving to the bush. The family and I love it out here — lots of fresh air, elbow room and a variety of wildlife always close by. It sure is a privilege to be so close to nature.



J. Laninga Family.

Bob and Karen Martin

by Crystal Cyr

Bob and Karen Martin and family moved to Fourth Creek in the spring of 1979. Prior to this time, Bob had been with the Edmonton Police Department for nine years.

Karen was born in Upper Musquodoboit, Nova Scotia. She met Bob while serving as a student minister on the Flatbush/French Creek Pastoral charge during the summer of 1969. Bob was active in the French Creek Church. They were married in 1970.

Their two oldest children, Robbie and Heather, were born in Edmonton. Andrew was born shortly after their move to the farm. Bob and Karen moved to Fourth Creek to fulfill Bob's lifelong desire to farm, and because they like the country and the people.



Bob Martin Family.

Phillip Martin Heritage

by Barb. Martin

It was February 27, 1935, when Frank and Johannah Martin announced the arrival of their first son, Phillip Martin. Frank and Johannah were married on February 18, 1934. They lived in Flatbush, Alberta, where they raised Phillip and the rest of their family.

Three years after Phillip was born, Marion Wold was born to Einar and Marie Wold, on June 20, 1938. Einar and Marie Wold came from Norway. They met in Canada, and later, on August 7, 1927, were mar-

ried. They settled in the Buffalo Lakes area, and here they raised Marion and her older sisters and brothers.

Phillip and Marion met, and were married on June 28, 1958. The four children they have today, were born in Grande Prairie. One of these children happens to be myself. After living in Grande Prairie for fourteen years Phillip and Marion decided to go farming. Upon tramping through sloughs and bush they reached a one-room shack with a power pole standing beside it.

Phillip purchased numerous pigs. Through raising and selling these, he made a living for his family. There was still no power within any of the buildings and a road had not been built into the so called farm site. That fall a larger room was built and the porch was added on to it. It was not until the following year that enough houses or shacks were pulled together to make a decent house, with power — finally.

In 1974 disaster struck! Our house along with all our belongings burned, but with help from friends and relatives a new house was built.

Phillip's and Marion's children are not all at home any more. Their oldest son is working in Grande Prairie, while their second oldest son is attending the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He is taking an engineering course. Their oldest daughter, myself, is still at home; taking my final year in High School. Their youngest daughter is in grade four, and Phillip and Marion hope she will also finish school at Savan-na.

Phillip and Marion are milking cows and farming their land. They have no elaborate plans for the future, but will cheerfully accept what is to come and pray for the best.

Barry Nelson Family

by Mallalea Benson

During the summers, in Barry's younger days when he was approximately nine or ten, he made several trips with his family to visit his father's home-stead in Fourth Creek, which at that time was rented by the Weleski family. Those trips seemed to inspire Barry's taste for farming.

Barry, who was originally from Bawlf, Alberta, attended the University of Alberta for four years, studying mechanical engineering. During those years of study, a new preoccupation entered Barry's life; her name was Donna Yuha, who in the summer of '75 became Donna Nelson. After one year of marriage, the Nelson family began to grow, Barry and Donna became the proud parents of their first child, a baby daughter they named Kimberly Ann Nelson. Barry still held the taste of farming, knowing that he and his family would move to the Fourth Creek area, but he decided to take a fifth year of

University — this time trying his hand at becoming a teacher. Along with Donna who had also studied education, they graduated from University in 1977.

In the spring of '77 Barry and his family moved to Fourth Creek, where he would help his father farm, and he would teach at the Silver Valley School, Savanna.

Donna began teaching at the Blueberry Creek School, where she taught grades 3 and 4. She taught there until 1978 when she transferred to the Silver Valley School. Another addition arrived to Barry's family in the summer of '78, another baby daughter they named Jennifer Dawn. In 1979 Barry bought land from Mel Parker who once lived in Fourth Creek, and the Barry Nelsons now live in the Parker house on that land.

Barry and Donna have various pastimes, such as curling, or Barry, playing hockey for the Savanna Sabres. During the summer Barry trades the skates and hockey stick for a pair of cleats and a glove, in order to play his position for the Fourth Creek Flyers.

Near the end of the school term of 1980 Donna left for Edmonton, where the third addition to their family was born; this time a bouncing baby boy named Curtis Kenneth Nelson. Donna has retired from her three full years of teaching, but she occasionally visits the school when she helps with the Kindergarten that her oldest daughter Kim now attends.

During the summer of 1980 Barry began a new project; building a new house which Donna is eagerly awaiting. Their history should grow with the years.

Mel and Cynthia Parker

Although Mel seemed to have gypsy blood, he always profitted from his investments. Melvin Floyd Parker, born 1927, has busied himself with varying occupations. His jobs have ranged from logging, construction, farming and auctioneering, to owning and operating a fast food business. His adventures have carried him from the Crystal Creek community to Northfield, to Fourth Creek, and to areas as far away as Prince George and Rutland, British Columbia.

On July 18, 1952, Mel married Cynthia Fredland of Grande Prairie. Cynthia, born in 1932, was the first child of Peter and Asbjorg Fredland of Northfield. Mel and Cynthia's first child, Thomas Fulton Parker was born in 1953 in Grande Prairie. In the same place, four years later a sister Phyllis Marie was born.

During their first stay in Fourth Creek, the Parkers resided on the southwest quarter of 28-81-8.

Tom started school in Fourth Creek when he had to walk a mile to reach his destination.

In one particular year, there were still very few roads in this area, rabies infected many of the local wildlife and domestic livestock. One very dark night, Mel was walking down a poor road along which inhabitants were few. Catching Mel completely unaware, something licked his hand, Mel froze! After cautious and worried investigation he found that it was only his neighbor, Herman Haugland's dog.

Mel, an avid fisherman and hunter, also enjoyed domestic animals. A couple of his more interesting pets were a cat which could roll over on command and a pig named Churchill. While living in Fourth Creek, Mel also played ball. He pitched for a team which consisted of such players as Nelius Haugland and brother Herman, Brian and Wilfred Fredland.

Cynthia was one of the first ladies involved in the Fourth Creek Ladies' Club. Meanwhile she was always active helping Mel with the farming.

Often she would take her bread to her mother's so that she could bake it while Cynthia drove the tractor. Later, in 1973, the Parkers returned to Fourth Creek, making their home on the SW. ¼ of 3-82-9. Tom Parker married Esther Rashke of Rutland, B.C., on Nov. 20, 1976. Their home was on N.E. of 28-81-9. Tom and his father farmed together until both families sold and moved out in 1979. Esther and Tom have a daughter born April 10, 1979, Charlene Marie. Presently Tom and Esther are living in Wembley while Mel and Cynthia are residing in Sexsmith. Phyllis has been working in the Royal Bank in Grande Prairie for the past 4 years.

submitted by Lyla Wyant

Robert and Lorine Paul

Bob was born and raised in the Grande Prairie area, he farmed with his Dad for awhile and worked in lumber camps during the winter. In 1955 he married Lorine Fredland, formerly of La Glace. For the next six years they lived in Grande Prairie where Bob worked for Horne and Pitfield. By 1961 they had three children, Ken, Valerie and Allen. By this time, their family had outgrown their house; they had to decide whether to build there or do something which they always wanted to do — go farming. The decision was made and on May 20, 1961, they moved to Fourth Creek to homestead the W half 13-81-9, which had been owned by Stanley Haugseth.

That first summer, Dad worked in Grande Prairie, only coming home on weekends. The first weekend home much to his surprise, his family was all scratching and red blotched. Apparently the mosquito oil had been overlooked. No telephone, no

indoor plumbing, and no power — was living in the country really what they wanted? As I have heard, there have been a few second thoughts.

In September of '61, my sister Brenda was born. That winter the family moved to a sawmill, south of Grande Prairie where Dad was working. That winter was the only time the farm has been vacant.

In the spring of '53 the last daughter was born, Fay. In 1966, Dad bought E ¼ 14-81-9 formerly owned by Talbert Foshaug. That was when the hard work began. Mom and Dad put in many, many long hours of brush piling, burning and root picking.

Times weren't all bad; neighbors had time for one another, visiting, ball games, dances in the old schoolhouse. After Moonshine Lake Park was opened, Sundays would find nearly all our neighbors there for the day.

As of now, Ken is shop foreman for R. Angus in Grande Prairie, and is married to Vicky Teghtmeyer — his high school sweetheart. Valerie plans to be married soon, to Dale Ostashek from Calgary, and lives in High Level.

Allan is working on the Oil patch about the country, Brenda is attending College in Grande Prairie, taking an Early Childhood Training Course. Fay is presently attending Savanna School, in grade 11.

In 1974, a new house was in process of being built, today we have power, telephones, indoor plumbing and mosquito oil. Times have been tough but Mom and Dad still feel that they made the right decision.

submitted by Fay Paul

Joe Plantinga Family **by Marlene Plantinga**

It was decided! Those two pages in the Edmonton Journal "Land for sale in Silver Valley" were pretty convincing, and to boot it was cheaper than land around Neerlandia. so in 1954, Joe, his brother Stewart, and their father Aebe Plantinga came to look for land around Silver Valley. Upon reaching Blueberry Mountain Store though, they were advised by Jack Bird that the land in Silver Valley was not very suitable for farming. The three of them still proceeded northward in Stewart's truck (even though there were no roads to speak of north of Blueberry Mtn.), and eventually landed in what is now known as Fourth Creek. Joe's first impression was that the land was pretty good, as he had observed people combining barley on the 6th of August in Blueberry Mountain whereas the grain was still green around Neerlandia, and also there was no big bush to deal with here.

On the return trip he went to Edmonton to file on a half section of land. Their father Aebe thought it an



Joe — Early homestead days.

excellent idea to work and farm up north. Their mother Minnie was almost totally against it and wished them to stay around Neerlandia. Over the winter they convinced themselves and their mother that it would be best to farm up here even though Joe was only nineteen at the time.

1955 was the year of the return of Joe and Stewart to this area to do their breaking and clearing with the Minneapolis U tractor belonging to their father, for the duration of their stay (summer). They lived in a wagon box covered with a tarp, and Joe was appointed to do the cooking. Joe also discovered that he had a neighbor other than his brother, by the name of Mike Sarabin.

Upon the arrival of fall the brothers returned to Neerlandia for the winter to return here in the spring of 1956. It had occurred to them that living in a wagon box was not exactly the best living conditions they could maintain, so they proceeded to build a red shack in which to dwell.

Joe decided to stay here permanently in 1957, and so built himself a house in which to dwell during the winter. This was the first year he had a crop in, but it was regrettably snowed under. Already changes could be noticed as bush began to be cleared and more fields became apparent.

The 1958 crop was the first taken off by Joe — with the mechanical help of a binder and threshing machine. About this time there came a parting of the ways between the two brothers, and so they no longer lived together.

Joe was supposedly beginning to feel the need for proof that it was a farm he had, so he built a barn and bought a number of pigs in the year 1960. The following year Stewart and Joe joined by their brother Gilles who helped them with their land in return for



Early House, 1957.

help with his land. He was also the one designated to go to Blueberry Mountain Store or Spirit River for groceries, gas, and other such necessities. This was done with horses and wagon, or tractor if it were wet. If the trail happened to be dry the truck was used.

Joe's first combine, a John Deere, was bought in the year 1962 and was seemingly put to good use by all three brothers.

1963 was the year romance became a part of Joe's life when he met Cathrina Harmanna Antina Salomans whom he proceeded to marry in April 1964. She lived in Lacombe. Both her parents were dead, and her closest relatives were her brothers and sisters. One brother and sister-in-law stood up with her at the wedding. The honeymoon was spent in coming back north to live and to dwell in the house Joe had built in 1957.

1965 was the year their first child, Marlene Grace was born. The summer was occupied in the building of the shop, and the winter was spent just outside Grande Prairie where Joe worked at one of the Sawmills. In the year 1966 their second child, Sandra Elaine, was born, to be followed in 1967 by Karen Louise. 1967 was also the year in which electricity was installed.

The years of 1968 and '69 were busy years for building a sawmill, a large pig barn, and the start of a 48' x 24' granary with eight bins in it. The planer was bought and some facilities of plumbing such as taps were put in the house and barn. 1970 held the finishing of the granary.

1971 was a year of decisions. Telephone lines were put in all over the community and were an added convenience. This was also the year in which Joe and Cathy were thinking of moving to Grande Prairie. This did not work out as they could not find a

renter for their land and they had no desire to move out again in the spring, so they stayed put and seemingly forgot about moving.

In 1972 yet another child was born, Beverly Ann, followed in 1974 by the arrival of the first boy and last child, Allen Glenn. The year of 1974 was also the year in which the house presently being lived in was built by Joe and some neighbours.

1977 turned out to be a year full of bad weather and rain, so no crop was planted, and of course no crop was taken off. There had been some other bad years, but usually if the crop was planted, Joe managed to get it off. As a result of the weather, the car garage was built that year.

Joe worked out winters at sawmills around the country and sometimes with his own until 1978 when he was no longer able to do so. During the summer of 1979 a granary containing four 6' x 12' bins was built.

By 1980 Joe owned five quarters and could file in Grande Prairie rather than in Edmonton as he had to at first. With a wife and five children, the situation has become vastly different from what it was when he first came here. Not only that, but more buildings have sprung up around the country, and more people have moved in, so the whole area had changed topographically as well as socially over the last 25 years.

Gilles and Margaret Plantinga and Family by Sandra Plantinga

Following in his brothers' footsteps, my Uncle Gilles came to the area in 1957 when he was only 18 years of age. Travelling by car from Neerlandia, Alberta, took all of seven hours driving. When he first decided to come, his parents wondered why, and he told them it was because there was cheap land available. When he finally left, their only sentiment was "Good Riddance!"

After filing for a half section of land in Edmonton, he drove north to settle down in a granary. In the late '50's and early '60's after his land was cleared and broken, he finally got a crop in, using an Oliver 99 tractor. That year nothing turned out right — first his wheat froze and then it was snowed under. A small portion was harvested and the pile was put on the ground because he hadn't got around to building granaries. He covered the pile with plastic and went south to Neerlandia for the winter. On his return the next spring the plastic was there but the wheat was gone. In its place was an abundance of moose droppings. The next few years his harvest was better and his line of machinery increased.

In 1949 Margaret Jensen was born in Phoenix, Arizona. Later her family moved to Santa Barbara,

California. She first arrived in this area in 1973 to teach and see another country. Her parents were not worried because they thought she would be back in a year. Little did they know that she was a skiing fan.

Gilles and Margaret met in the summer of 1977. Margaret already had one child from a previous marriage. Rea was born on November 20, 1969. In December 1977 Gilles and Margaret tied the knot. At the wedding his mother is quoted as saying, "He has been waiting a long time for the right girl to come along. Now she's come, and when he bends down he won't get a kink in his neck". Since then they have made another addition to the family. Henry Vern was born on September 27, 1980, and miracle of miracles, the buttons are still attached to Gilles' shirt.

Stewart Plantinga

In September 1954 Stewart, Joe and Mr. Plantinga left Neerlandia for a drive to the Peace River Country, to look at some Lassiter land which was advertised in the Edmonton Journal. Having heard about Blueberry Mountain from Walter Tharp who was hauling lumber for the Imperial Lumber at Barrhead, we decided to head for Blueberry via the old Slave Lake highway to see what the country was like.

After visiting around Blueberry with some of its pioneers, it was learned that there was land across the Bear Creek, where a lot of it could be broken without too much clearing. Following a tour through Fourth Creek with George Esselink's tractor and wagon, Stewart and Joe each picked a half section — W½ 35-82-8, and E½ 34-82-8, along the correction line between townships 82 and 83. At the time, standing in a wagon box, the open country could be seen for five to six miles around. On the way home, we drove to the Edmonton land office, and placed a \$5 deposit on each half section.

The following summer of 1955 Joe and Mr. Plantinga came up for a month and proceeded to clear and break 70 acres with the help of Case Hoetmar. The smaller brush was ploughed down, and the heavier bluffs cut out by axe. The joys of owning a farm some day had begun. The improvement and residence duties were fulfilled in 1960, and the titles for these half sections were obtained for \$300 each. The roads were usually cutlines or the old zig zag oil road, and after a rain storm there was usually only one mudhole which was from the doorstep to a person's destination. Blueberry Mountain at the time was the closest communication centre — Store, Church, Blacksmith Shop, and Nurse's Residence.

In June 1956 a secondary highway was built north of the Blueberry Store to the Bear Creek, with an elevating grader and scrapers. The same outfit came back in October and began building from the Bear

Creek north and west, heading for the Fourth Creek and the Silver Valley districts. The intention was to build the road to the Fourth Creek School, but this had to be given up when winter set in, with only about three miles partly completed. The summer and fall of 1957 turned out to be terribly wet with no road work being done in the area. The crops were taken off in the mud that year, and most grain was harvested tough and damp. Tough oats were worth 38 cents per bushel that winter, and most of the oats were used for feed. Hogs the next spring were bringing approximately \$45 for a finished hog, and this was considered a good price. Some crops were left out all winter and didn't get harvested at all due to the wet ground.

After being unable to do any more breaking, Stewart went to work for Jack Bird operating a backhoe to put in water and sewer lines to the Blueberry Store and the Nurse's Residence. A few farmers also got the first water and sewer services in the area. In 1958 Stewart and Joe were joined by another brother Gilles, filing on a homestead. He remains farming in the district, with his wife and two children.

The next summer 1959 being very dry, the road crew arrived back in the area building the road into the Silver Valley district, and to Wold's corner in Fourth Creek. The years 1959-60-61-62 were favorable years with average crops. It was then that the country began to prosper; the better crops enabling the homesteaders to open up more land, purchase better machinery.

Being a catskiner in previous years, Stewart decided to purchase a TD 18 cat in 1962 and set out clearing and breaking land. In January 1964 a meeting with the Canadian Utilities was held in the Silver Valley Hall, and the Silver Valley REA was formed to get electricity into the area. Stewart was elected to the board of 7 directors, and in 1965 became president of the board. The lamps and lanterns were abandoned in many homes when the lights were turned on in March 1965. In 1966 Stewart was married to Doris Eben, and later blessed with two children, Daryll and Shirley. We still remain in the area — 1980 — with our mixed farming, mainly cattle.

Bill and Olive Pollard

In 1953, Bill and Olive Pollard applied for their homestead lease for the land S ½-30-81-8. At that point in time, the community now known as Fourth Creek was classified as a part of the Blueberry Mountain area. Bill and Olive had only been married one short month when they applied for the land. Bill was originally from Westlock, Alberta, while Olive's home area was Fort St. John, British Columbia.

In April of 1954, they received their homestead lease and that summer, the Pollards travelled from



Bill and Olive.

Edmonton to their homestead. There was no graded road on this side of the Bear Creek canyon — only a bush trail. During their stay, they attempted to make some improvements on the bush-covered farm. They hired Andy Clarke — their neighbor, to brush and pile 75 acres over a two year period. The rate then was \$9.00 for one acre. In the fall they returned to Edmonton and to proper roads and living conditions. In October of that year, Gail was born in the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton.



Olive and four girls.

The summer of 1955 rolled around and the Polards made their yearly expedition to their homestead. More breaking was completed and also Bill began to build a garage for the family to live in, for the time being. The garage was constructed out of culled lumber from Spirit River. After the lumber had been up for awhile, the knots fell out. Olive plugged the holes with newspaper so that the mosquitoes, which were so thick in those days, could not enter. However the chickadees flew by and mischievously picked the newspapers out of the holes, and the race went on. Olive would plug the holes and the chickadees would unplug them.

That same summer, Bill worked in Grande Prairie and returned to the homestead on weekends. Olive and Gail stayed at the homestead in the newly built garage. On some occasions, Bill couldn't return home because the roads were impassable. Once Olive and Gail were left on the homestead alone for two solid weeks. They didn't see a soul or talk to anyone but their shadows. Olive was just terrified because there were no phones and no roads to speak of so she just hoped that neither Gail nor she would become ill or require help. In the fall, they all departed from their homestead and for the winter, worked at Kinuso. Bill hauled lumber for Gib. Rogney while Olive cooked for the camp and washed clothes for some of the men. She put her money towards the house that was to be built on the homestead.

In the spring, again, they journeyed to their slowly shaping homestead. Upon their arrival, they spotted a pattern which a bear had made. They soon discovered that at 4:30 p.m. every afternoon, the bear crossed in the area that is now our lawn. Bill continued to work in Grande Prairie during the week and thus, Olive and Gail were left alone on the homestead. Olive said she would lie awake at night worrying about that bear. She was frightened that after his daily pass, he might turn around and return to the site of the garage and try to get in because of the smell of food. Olive, during her sleepless nights, devised a plan should the bear return. There was only one door, which only made the problem more complicated. She thought that if the bear did get in, she would stand on the corner of the bed and place Gail high on the rafters and then she would also climb up there. Fortunately, her plan never needed to be put into action.

The mosquitoes were unbelievably thick at that time in this area. The only way Olive could permit Gail to play outside in the summer was to dress her up in a snowsuit. If not, the mosquitoes would have bitten her quite severely.

That same summer, Bill started the house. For the



Sawing at homestead.



Building house.

foundation, he hauled gravel from the pit in Yellow Creek. Since there were no loaders at that time, the men had to shovel the gravel onto the truck and then shovel it off again. The lumber was bought in Spirit River. It required three days to get the first load of lumber into the homestead during which time it rained. They just continued to get stuck on the way home. Once, they attempted to turn around at Mr. and Mrs. Smith's driveway but unfortunately got stuck again. The Smiths told Bill that he and his family were welcome at their home until the rain-storm ended. It continued to rain for two days. Dennis and Myron Rude, who also had gotten stuck, were pulled out by Mr. Smith. They unloaded their tractor at Smiths. Then they followed Bill to the homestead with their tractor and truck. Any time one of the trucks got stuck, the fellow on the tractor would pull the truck out. After that rainy summer, they left the homestead in the fall.

After a long winter of logging in Kinuso again, the Pollards took their summer vacation at the homestead. They completed the house so that it was comfortable to move into. The road passing by the homestead was brushed out that year. It probably wasn't much of a road, but I guess to the pioneers, it was like a highway. Once during the summer, it had rained and rained — a common thing for those years, it seems — and the Pollards, who needed to get out to Grande Prairie, had quite a ride getting out. When they had come in, they had left their truck at the canyon. When it was time to leave, they rode out on the steel wheeled John Deere tractor. Bill was driving the tractor while Olive, Gail, and two dogs were passengers. They travelled in this rather uncomfortable manner to the canyon, where their truck was and where the graded road began.

Bill says that in those years the roads were terrible. You could drive for a distance but then would get stuck — almost as though it was inevitable. So, the farmers would leave their tractors at the edge of their fields or at the ends of their driveways. Thus, when a traveller would get stuck, he would simply walk to the nearest tractor and pull his vehicle out.

The following year, 1958, another addition was added to the Pollard family. And guess what, another daughter! Gwen was born in August in Grande Prairie. Very little was finished on the homestead that year. I guess with the new girl in the family, the Pollards felt they could take a vacation. During the summer, they made a few occasional visits but hardly any work was performed.

1959 came and the road going past the Pollard place was built and gravelled. It must have been a luxury having a graded road. That year, a three bin granary was built on a foundation on the homestead.

Before the Pollards received the title, the farmer had to meet certain obligations. He had to build a house with a value of at least \$1200. He had to have at least 100 acres broke and also there were residence



Bill on old tractor.

duties to meet — that is, the family had to live on the farm for at least 12 months. Oh, and of course, the crop shares had to be paid. Every year the farmer had to pay one-eighth of his crop value to the government, and if you didn't have a crop you paid a certain sum anyway. All totalled, it cost \$300 after the improvements that I've mentioned. In August, after renting the farm out for the next 6 years to Nelius Haugland, we returned to the city, with Bill driving the truck. In 1963 the electric power was put in, at a cost of \$1790.

In 1964 another daughter, Glenda was born in the Royal Alex, Edmonton. In July of '66 we moved into Fourth Creek to stay and built the barn and cow shed. Gwen in grade 3 and Gail in grade 6 were to attend the Savanna School, nine miles away. It consisted of 4 rooms, quite a difference from the 20 room one in Edmonton.

Bill took over the operation of Fourth Creek grader, and in October our cows were brought up from Edmonton, 15 cows and a bull. That November Gloria was born, the final addition to the Pollard family. In 1968 another ½ section was added, which became the pasture. In '73 the phones were installed, making us wonder how we ever got along without them. This was the year Olive started to work as a C.N.A. at the Spirit River hospital.

In 1975 the big cow shed was built. Gail was married to Matt Milkovich in June, and they now farm at Wanham. In '76 Bill bought a ½ section across the road from the home place. That July a new grandson was born, Shane Milkovich, and in 1978, a granddaughter, Crystal Milkovich. In 1979 Gwen married Andy Spence and they now live in the Cotillion district.

The beginning of 1980 finds Bill still working on the grader and looking after 27 head of cattle. Olive is still working in the hospital, Gloria is in Grade 8 and Glenda in Grade 10.

There have been many changes over the years, from bush and bears to wide open fields and good roads and all the other improvements.

Ted Roose History

Ted (Theodore Arnold) Roose, and his wife Muriel (Leone Anderson) Roose first came to the Fourth Creek Community in 1962, to homestead, after having already completed what would have been for many another, one farm history.

Ted's parents emigrated from Sweden and came to Alberta in 1903. Muriel's parents came from Ontario and were of Irish and Scottish descent. They all moved to Camrose, Alta., and homesteaded there.

After Ted and Muriel married, they lived seven miles northeast of Camrose for 25 years. In that time they had three sons — Theodore Gustave (Gus), Patrick James (Pat), and Timothy Wayne (Tim).

In 1961 Ted got itchy feet, so moved to Grande Prairie, then in 1962 Ted and the two older sons picked out their homesteads in Fourth Creek. Tim, the younger one, acquired his when he came of age in 1968.

In 1963 Gus married Constance Marie Reinhart (Connie) of German descent and raised on a farm near Provost, Alta. Her folks moved to Camrose in 1960 where she and Gus met. She acquired a half section of land when she moved north, and she and Gus built their first home on Gus's land which was rather isolated at the time. Pete Fredland and Nolan Risvold were their nearest neighbors until the Harold Dow family moved in.



Present house.



Ted Roose Farewell.

Many a time after a big rain, a tractor was the only transportation to the main road. In fact, on the May 24th long weekend in 1964, their first son Richard Theodore (Rick) born in Grande Prairie, arrived at his new home with a tractor pulling the truck from P. Fredland's. They often went visiting in rainy weather on the tractor, and card games were a favorite entertainment in the days before power and television.

One rather unpleasant experience that summer, was the day Nolan Risvold, Gus, Connie, and Rick decided to go to town. The Creek was so high at Fredland's that the bridge was floating, therefore before driving across, Nolan and Gus put planks across, and precariously drove over. That was minor compared to the wheels of Nolan's car plugging up with mud. It took two hours or so to get from the bridge to the Fourth Creek Hall. Needless to say everyone was covered with mud by then. Our second son Murray Shawn (Shawn) was born in Spirit River, June 1, 1968.

Gus played ball for several years, for the Fourth Creek Flyers, so many enjoyable Sundays were spent with a pot luck picnic after the ball games. Gus worked out several winters at various jobs, and Connie was the librarian at Savanna School for five years. (1974-79).

There were many good friends and neighbors who were especially helpful and generous when Gus and Connie lost their home and belongings in a fire in 1972. They bought an old-Blueberry Creek School teacherage in which they lived for several years before building a new house.

Pat got his half section cleared, then moved to Grande Prairie and worked for A.G.T. He married Fern Leone Leavins from High River, Alta., and they have had four daughters — Lisa, Laura, Jana, and Deanna. They now live in Medicine Hat.

Tim took up welding as well as helping on the farm. He married Lynda Lewis of Edmonton and they are now living in Medicine Hat, with one daughter Deedrie, and a new son Theodore Wayne.

Many changes have taken place in this country since the Roose's came. Roads were very unreliable at first, especially after the rains, but there is a good gravel grid-work now, and even much pavement . . . Wild game is becoming less plentiful, but moose, deer, bear, beaver, and muskrats were abundant then. (Many were the times when bears visited the back door and the dog's dish.) . . . Bird life deserves a mention, with many bush partridge, prairie chicken, ducks, geese, etc., which were for the hunting, plus the many beautiful song birds . . . Wild berries such as raspberries, high and low bush cranberries, strawberries, blueberries, saskatoons, choke cherries, etc.

were readily available, and with the good gardens which could be grown, helped reduce the cost of living.

With the help of his sons and a D-8 caterpillar (of which Jim Hale was a former partner), Ted cleared 1500 acres. The family helped with the building of the curling rink, and participated in curling . . . Muriel also helped with the Ladies Club.

The Fourth Creek Community Hall was a focal point of the district where everything was held, from Sunday School to general meetings and all social gatherings. They also count themselves fortunate to have had a good school (first Fourth Creek, then Savanna) nearby.

There were also advantages to living across the creek from the Blueberry Mountain area. The district nurse, Miss Ferrier, resided there, and her services were available at any time. The general store Imperial Oil bulk services, post-office, etc. located there were operated by Jack and Wilma Bird, and were invaluable to everyone in the area. Last but not least was the curling rink which boasted only one sheet of ice but provided much entertainment and social encounter, until the Fourth Creek one was built with two sheets of ice. The Roose's made good use of both over the years.

Ted and Muriel have now retired to an acreage in Sechelt, B.C., but plan to maintain their connections with their former good neighbors from here.

Dennis Rude

In March of 1955 I went to Grande Prairie and filed on the N. ½ 20-81-8-W.6 in the Fourth Creek district. My two older brothers had been in the area for a while, so I was following their lead. It was too late that spring to get any land cleared and ready, so it wasn't until the next year that I had the first thirteen acres brushed and broken. Land clearing after that came slowly, with hard work and a never ending supply of roots to pick by hand, which to the Government, never seemed fast enough.

In 1959, with the help of Herman Haugland and my Dad, we built a log house from plywood cores purchased in Grande Prairie for 5 cents each. The house was only one room, 16' x 24', but it was a start.

Batching being what is was, I got married to Brenda Sands in September of 1961. We made our first home in Grande Prairie, then in March of 1963, through snow and mud, we moved to the homestead. Our first task was to make our little log shack a home. That being done, we settled down for some more winter in April. We spent only the summer months there, and during the winters we worked in B.C., trying to pay off the bills that had piled up over the summer.



Family Picture.

One of the biggest concerns then, and probably our biggest bill, was at Bird's Store in Blueberry Mtn. If it hadn't been for the credit extended by these good people we probably could not have afforded to spend much time on the farm. Their generosity was exceeded by no one.

I filed successfully on a third quarter of land, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ -34-81-8-W.6. After clearing seventy acres on "17", and farming it for a few years I sold it to Walter Yanishewski.

In 1966 our daughter Tracey arrived to change our life style slightly, although it wasn't long till she was used to mosquitoes and spending Sundays in a hot vehicle at the ball games. Teryl's adoption in 1969 filled our house with excitement. While seeing her for the first time in Edmonton, Tracey remarked, "Let's take her and get out of here," so we did, and this ended the growth of our family.

Farming became more of a year round thing when Tracey started school and we had to stay put. We had had some fair crops and some big disappointments, so we decided straight grain farming wasn't the answer. We bought a flock of sheep and learned that it always rained in haying season. The sheep were a lot of work, a great experience, and lots of fun.

It seemed we never had enough money to go around after all those years on the farm, so in the fall of 1974 my brother Irvin and I bought a truck and went to La Glace to haul logs for the winters. In the summer of 1975 I bought out Irvin's share of the truck, sold him my share of our farm machinery, and moved my family to La Glace. I later sold the farm to Harold Davison.

Our time spent there, and the friends we made in Fourth Creek and area will be cherished for many years.

Mike Sarabin

I was born in a small village near Lviw City, in the Ukraine on March 23rd, 1904. My father came to Canada in 1907, and I came to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan with my mother in 1912. A year later we moved to a homestead in the Honeymoon district, 15 miles from Prince Albert. There I spent my young years farming.

I had a friend in the pulpwood business at The Pas, in Manitoba, and he asked me if I'd like to come and work for him, as a foreman in the bush. This I did, and when we had finished the bush there, the company asked us to move to Alberta, so we ended up in Spirit River. When I first came to Spirit River in 1947, the country appealed to me very much. It was nice farming land, and crops looked very good that year. The more I saw of the country, the better I liked it. I was not tied up with anything, so when we got to the end of the pulpwood I could easily get into something else.

For some reason I liked the bush, and there was lots of it, so I felt that a sawmill would fit in nicely for a while. Pulp was going fine for a while, but later there seemed to be more and more problems, and I could see less and less money in that setup we were in. For that reason I started to look for a sawmill for myself, and it didn't take long to find one. I paid for the sawmill and moved it to my camp at Poplar Ridge where I had logs stockpiled.

I didn't know much about sawmills, but knew I had to get someone who did. I remembered Bill Nahirniak, a man who had been in my camp and who talked a lot about sawmills. He was in Spirit River at that time and when I approached him he was willing to come. In a few days the mill was set and ready to



First Sawmill, southwest Blueberry.

go, and Bill took on the job of sawyer. Things went well till we finished all the logs. We worked with only dry timber on that setup. In the first place, it was very cheap stumpage, then we were on high ground which made it easy for people to come and see me, or move the lumber out from the mill. The lumber, and even the slabs were dry, like seasoned wood, and could be used right away, so I had some money coming in which I needed badly.

We began to have problems with the sawmill which I didn't know much about. It started heating and we didn't know what to do about it. At that time I was sawing for Jack Bird and he needed the lumber and some other material to build his store, so he was on pins and needles to get going on his building. He asked Jim Paish to come and have a look at the mill to see if he could determine what was wrong. Jim checked a few things here and there and told us he thought it wasn't solid enough. Once it was blocked up well, husk set and levelled, that was all it needed, and from then on we had no more problems. Whenever it was moved after that, I made sure it was set solid. For the first three years I was sawing winter and summer if there was work to do. Next eight years I sawed in the winter only.

In 1953 I decided to look for some land that the Alberta Government had opened for homestead, northwest of Blueberry Mountain. Ben Mitchell, his wife, and I decided to take homesteads, and I made up my mind to have something good or nothing. It was late that evening when we made up our minds, so decided we'd wait till next day, look things over carefully and make a second choice in case the first was not available. We had to go to Peace River to lease the land, but we were lucky enough to get our first choice. Now it only had to be inspected before we could do any work on it.

Since I had learned something about a sawmill from my few problems, now it was a farm, but I knew

something about farming from the past, and I liked farming, especially stock. I liked horses and had to have them in the bush at the sawmill. In some ways they were good on a farm if you liked to use them.

Now I had to get started opening up some land by having brush cut and some breaking done, but there was no one around to do it. It was getting close to harvest and everybody was busy on something else. My good old friend Bill Skoworodko offered to come and look at my land. He thought it would be no problem to plow it, so in a few days he came over with a tractor and plow, and did 20 acres. That was all I got done that year as I had to get a granary built to have a roof over my head at the farm. I was quite happy that I had managed to do that much work on the farm, and now I would have a chance to put in some crop next year.

Now I loaded up and moved back to camp for a while. I already had horses, harness, and feed oats, but I didn't have enough hay for them. I tied one horse to a tree, and turned the other one, named Jim, loose with a heavy chain while I went for coffee. When I came out again — no Jim, so I started to track him. I got as far as Mr. Dolen's but no Jim, only tracks towards DeBolt district. Frances let me have a horse, so I started with a horse from there. It took a little time as this was a kid's horse and very slow. Before long my sitter was sore, but the tracks were still on the road and I knew he was ahead of me.

Finally I came to Bill Skoworodko's gate and saw the track of the chain to his yard, so I knew Jim had to be there. I had had my horses in Bill's pasture at different times, so Jim did not like my homestead and made up his own mind where he wanted to be. Bill met me with a laugh and I had to do the same, so decided to forgive Jim for the trick he played on me. He was my best horse in the bush and all around, wherever I needed him.

I had a car at Bill Skoworodko's so was all right from there on. Had a rest, was fed, but had to hurry to rescue the horse that was left behind tied to a tree, with his harness on. It was a big long day for me with nothing accomplished.

Next day I went to see Mr. Dolen and find out whether I could bring my horse to his pasture for a little while till I could get organized. Mr. Dolen was a good neighbor and we had lots in common in the years ahead.

Now I began to see how the sawmill would help me in different ways — bringing in money to help build the farm, and to make deals to get some breaking done. In a year I could get some feed off the farm to use in the bush, so it would work as a team to get going both ways.

Now I could get a government permit for a total of



Mike, Mrs. Fredland and boys.

50,000 board feet of lumber that I needed for farm buildings, and the cost would be less than the regular stumpage rate. To explain how my operation was working — first I had to know from the government the location of the timber that farmers had permission to cut. Then I had to have a permit to set up my sawmill nearby, and could carry on my business as long as my permit would allow. I had to notify the government the amount of lumber each farmer got and the Forest Ranger would check up once in a while to make sure the slabs were not too heavy and there was no waste.

When I finished bush work I was happy to get back on the farm again. I was so anxious to get going on my 70 acres of breaking and get it done early for once. For the two previous years my breaking was late, and I wanted to have it ready for next year's crop, so I would have feed for the stock I planned on having. I had bought a breaking plow of my own by this time as I had lots of breaking to do.

Frances Dolen, Guy Gano, and Herman Hindmarch came to visit me, and we decided to get together and buy a threshing machine if the crops were good. I was happy to join the group and we bought a threshing machine in the fall for \$200. With a little fixing it was very good and threshed many crops, till combines took over the harvesting.

That first year with the threshing machine we had a nice fall and I got back at the breaking with a root harrow. I kept at that till the frost stopped me, then I went back to the bush. I always started logging first, and that year I had a contract cutting heavy timber for the Spirit River Municipality. They wanted the timbers in their yard for summer use, so we could work on that contract between customer orders. I had a good winter in the bush and was able to buy a seed drill, a good used disc, and a new set of six harrows, and pay cash for them. I still needed a smaller tractor than the one I had, so I went to town and made a deal with Dave Ross for one I wanted — a second hand one that cost me \$550. The tires were badly worn but they lasted thro' the spring work, and I got new tires for it the following year.

That summer I did some cutting and piling on lumber for winter work. I didn't plan on any more breaking as I had stock by this time and had fencing to do, and a barn to build. I made a deal with my neighbor Fred Wold to look after my stock in the winter and he was happy to do it.

I like stock, and decided to try raising them. In three or four years I built up my herd to about 30 head, but I lost my pasture when the government decided to open the school land for leasing. I had some deals on the sawmill operation, and since I had no pasture on my land, I decided to let the cattle go.

I should mention the Fourth Creek Community where I lived. We seemed like one big family. At first we had no hall, and no roads, so we gathered at various homes, later at the school, then at the Hall. Later when roads did improve, it seemed harder to catch anyone at home, as the neighbors seemed to do more visiting away from the district — a trend that couldn't be avoided.

On my last year in the bush, I noticed my health failing, making it hard to work in the bush in winter and farm in summer. First I sold my sawmill or I knew someone would talk me into going back into the bush.

John Salamon happened to stop at my place and I told him what I had in mind. John was interested in buying it but he had no money, so we made a deal. John was to cut, pile and break the 80 acres I still had left to do, and the sawmill was his. That summer he did the work, then owned the sawmill. He was happy and I was happy.

In 1968 I sold the farm to Wilfred Fredland and I moved to Toronto where I married and settled down. I feel I am lucky to have such a nice family now in my old age.

Elwood and Marie Schultz

Elwood (Woody) and Marie settled in Fourth Creek in April of 1964. During this first settlement they rented land from Marie's parents. On May 26th, 1964 their first child Darlene Marie was born.

During the winters of 1964, '65, '66, '69, and '71, Woody, Marie, and the girls ventured off to Grande Prairie where they would live until the next spring came. While they lived in Grande Prairie Woody took up the job of being a machine operator for Imperial Lumber Company.

In 1965 the power was brought into Fourth Creek. This brought much convenience to the residents, and was a big event which pleased everyone.

Woody ran a cat for John Salamon in the summer of 1966, and their second child Carolyn Gail was born June 16th of that year. While this was all going on Woody and Marie were building a small house in which they could live. The dimensions of the house were 20' by 24'.

In 1967 they were able to get their own homestead — this was the north half of 18-82-7-W.6 and the NE¼ of 17-82-7-W.6. During the summer and winter months of that year, Woody cleared land on his homestead. He ran Harold Davison's cat to do so.

In 1970, Woody, Marie and girls motored down to Banff on their first real holiday, and in 1971 AGT pleased everybody by installing phones in the majority of homes in Fourth Creek. During 1974 an oil rig moved onto the NE¼ of 17, thus giving access to that



Schultz Family.

piece of land. The road which was previously there was not fit to travel on. In the months of February and March of 1975, Woody worked for the seismic, as a surveyor. He worked in the surrounding area. Also in this year they built onto their house and put a full basement under it. Presently this is still their home. In 1976 the winter was so open and mild that on December 6th Gordie Howell dug us a dugout.

Remember the road which was put in by the oil rig? It gave us access to the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of 17. Well, in 1976 a hail storm washed the crossing out on the creek, thus creating a road which could not be travelled on, so in 1977 we decided to sell that land. Also in this year, Woody started work at the Blueberry Forest Products Co-op. He has worked there during winter months and part of the summer months ever since.

They often remember times when their crops have frozen, or when they have had real dry years, and especially when they have had good years. One spring it was so wet that they seeded no more than 40 acres. Then in September it snowed two feet and they were unsuccessful in getting their crop off. Oh well, that's life in Fourth Creek!

William and Eva Schulz and Family

In the year 1962 William Schulz made up his mind to go farming. He purchased a farm in Fourth Creek, Alberta, thirty-some miles away from the nearest store — Bird's, at Blueberry Mountain.

He homesteaded the half section in 1962 and in 1963 broke the land. Beginning in 1964, he made the

first attempt at putting in the crop; however, unfortunately it froze out.

In 1965, he tried once more and the crop turned out a success. This same year was also successful for another reason — a new member joined the family of William, Eva, and their three children, Robert William, age seven; Emma Louise, age five; and Walter Richard, age two. This new member was a beautiful baby girl — Barbara Ann.

In 1966, William decided it was time to make Fourth Creek, Alberta his permanent residence, so after school let out Willi brought his older son and daughter, Robert and Louise, all the way from Valemount, B.C., to Wanham, Alberta. Here he left the two children with some friends of the family, John and Grace Podruzny, who were also the people who assisted Willi in finding the home in Fourth Creek. He then made a second trip to his former hometown of Valemount to pick up his wife Eva, his two youngest children, Walter and Barbara, and the rest of the family belongings.

In Fourth Creek, the Schulz family moved into an old shack (now the old house) which was one-ply lumber and had no power, plumbing, or telephone. They lived in the shack until December 12, 1966, when they had to build a bigger and better house. They were forced out of the shack in -50° F weather when the heater ceased to work and the walls iced up. The house they built was only supposed to be a home for two years then be used as a garage; however, the new house the Schulz family built is the house in which they still live, and which has power. The 1966 crop froze.

The year 1967 brought forth a good crop and was the year that Willi decided to raise cattle and hogs. In 1967 Eva's father and brother brought three heifer calves and a bull from Meadow Lake, Sask., to Fourth Creek, for the Schulz family. The three cows immediately became family pets and were named Ginger, Star, and Susie. Star can still be seen at the Schulz farm and Ginger was sold just recently. Susie was sold a year ago. This was also the year that the barn was built.

In 1968, the crop froze on the fifth day of August. This was described as "the biggest disappointment ever". All 500 acres froze and the poor crop barely made feed for the livestock.

In 1969, the porch was added on to the house. The year 1969 was a dry year — too dry for the Schulz family. This was the awful year in which the Schulz's practically got burned out of house and home. A fire was started nearby and got out of control. This fire spread quickly, reached and burned the fences. The fire had just about reached the house and barn, and the family was just getting ready to

“move out” when the wind changed direction and the fire changed with it. The last minute change of the wind saved the Schulz’s — otherwise, they could have lost everything. There are still ugly scars of that awful 1969 fire. Although the year was dry, the crops were still fairly good.

In 1970 and ’71, the crops were poor because of excessive moisture. November of 1971 was the month that the Schulz family received the pleasures of the telephone — the pleasure they now say they are unaware of how they ever lived without it.

However, in 1972, the crop was good. This was also the year that another member joined the family. The latest and likely the last member was a wonderful little girl — Ingrid Patricia.

In 1973 the crops were poor, again due to excess moisture. Willi and his family didn’t get the crops off and they were snowed under. He had bought expensive barley and had 300 pigs to feed. That was the unfortunate year that the Schulz family lost \$6,000.00 on hogs.

In 1974 Willi and his family didn’t get much crop in because it was too wet to get on the fields. In fact, they only got 70 acres seeded and then they got hailed out.

The year 1975 was a dry year, and the Schulz family had to move the cattle to another dug-out because there was not adequate water at the present dug-out. That winter the Schulz’s lost quite a few cattle. The year 1975 was also the year that the Schulz family took their very first holiday. They decided to go to Meadow Lake, Sask., and spent a mere week there. They then came back to Fourth Creek to work once again.

In 1976 the crop was fair; however, there was 40-50% hail damage. This was the year it was so wet that the Schulz’s couldn’t get the crop off till they took it off on the frost.

In 1977, William Schulz and family couldn’t get the crop in due to excessive moisture. They did get 80 acres in finally, but it was in so late that it did not do very well. Then in the fall of ’77 Willi couldn’t get the few acres off and it lay out over winter.

In 1978 the crops were fairly good. On May 6th, Louise Schulz daughter of Willi and Eva, was wed to Klaus Reinich in Edmonton, Alta.

In 1979 the crops were again fairly good. This was the year the Schulz family was over-joyed by the visit of Willi’s sister and son, Maria and Thomas Ruckert, from Dusseldorf, Germany, for the summer months. Willi and his family took Maria and Thomas to Meadow Lake and to Edmonton and introduced them for the first time to the relatives of the family. This was also the pleasant year that Robert Schulz

was married to Audrey Rosko in Spirit River, on the ninth of November.

Now it is 1980, and this year’s crop seems to be fairly good tho’ harvesting is not yet finished. The Schulz family have been through a lot in their past eighteen years in Fourth Creek and have accomplished a lot. The Schulz’s started out with two quarters of land, and now in 1980 have eight quarters, so that concludes the history of the Schulz family up to the month of October, in the year nineteen hundred and eighty . . .

John and Mabel Stetar

John and Mabel Stetar were both born in Saskatchewan, and were also married there. They later moved to the Raymond district of Alberta where they took up farming. They had five children, 3 girls, and 2 boys while they were in Southern Alberta. The three girls, Jeanette, Gloria, and Joyce, are all married and all live in Campbell River, B.C. The two boys are also married. Vern lives in Grande Prairie, and Gerry lives in Camrose.

In the fall of 1964 they acquired land in the Fourth Creek area. In July of 1966 John and Mabel and three of their children moved and homesteaded that land. In September of 1973 they sold their land to Glen and Janet Wyant, and took up another homestead in the same area. Here they farmed until the spring of 1979, when they sold their farm and moved to Camrose, Alberta. John is now helping his son there with a White farm equipment dealership.

Henry and Zenia Senner

Henry first started living in the town of Spirit River in 1958. During the next 5 years, until ’63, had a variety of positions, gravel truck driver, tree faller, cook in sawmill camps around the Grande Prairie area and in Mackenzie, B.C. It was around 1959 that he decided to become a farmer. The next three years were hard years, filled with double shifts at his job and hard work during the summer and winter months. Henry finally had enough money to buy a D6 Cat, and he started his goal of building a farm; he decided they would go some place where there was new land, so headed north to Fourth Creek.

At that time in ’63, there were few roads, just trails and the main Fourth Creek road. Norman Fitzsimmons and Henry together, built up their farms, helping one another. They built their own road from what is now Gram’s corner to half mile past Harold’s driveway, which is now Dan Fitzpatrick’s place. Henry homesteaded in ’63 and cleared 40 acres, also doing 40 acres for Norman.

The first signs of progress came in the fall of ’65

when the Dept. of Highways built the now existing road, and it was finished the spring of '66. In the meantime, however, if it rained, the only way to get to the main road was by foot or tractor and the bale wagon, which was used quite often. One other mark of progress was the installation of power.

The only building was a small bunkhouse which Henry and Norman used while they were working. Most of the time we lived in town, Henry driving a gravel truck through the week and farming on week-ends. With the help of 4 sons and helpful neighbors, we started the house in '68, finishing it in the spring of '69. In the summer of '72 a new addition was added, but we had officially moved into the house August of '69. That summer was very hectic, trying to do the farm work, pack and move belongings out from town, using the grain truck. After that was complete, the men started to demolish the town house, and bring the lumber out to the farm to be put into the building of the chicken house and cow shelters.

When the children first started to school, in Savanna, Randy was in Grade 2, Marlene in Gr. 3, Sandra in Gr. 6, Ken in Gr. 7 and Karl in Gr. 10. Rhonda was too young to attend school and Don had previously dropped out.

Over the past 17 years, Henry cleared a section and a half of land with the use of two cats which he owned at different times. Now he owns a front-end loader and is thinking of leaving the farm and going into the construction business. He feels that he has lived up to his goal and it's time for the "younger ones" to start taking over. Presently Henry and Randy are doing the farming, along with the help of Zenia, Sandra and Rhonda. Karl works for Henry on the loader and hopes to have his own farm in Gordondale, he is married to Judy McLachlan, Ken lives in Mackenzie, working at the sawmill and Don lives on Vancouver Island, near Cobble Hill, where he works as a mechanic.

The Wyant Family

by Eldon Wyant

Janet Fredland, the youngest daughter of Pete and Asbjorg Fredland, moved with her parents to the Fourth Creek Area. Janet and her brother Brian rode horseback in the summer and drove horse and cutter in the winter when they had to travel the 2½ miles to the Fourth Creek School. Vivian Haugland was the supervisor at that time and all the students had to take correspondence because of the lack of a teacher.

In 1961 Janet married Glen Wyant, formerly from Hythe, Alberta. They applied for a homestead on the south half of 24-81-9, shortly after they were married. They received the homestead in 1962 and had

the first fifty acres brushed, piled and broken for \$1,000.00 — a far cry from today's prices. In August of 1962 a daughter, Lyla, and in the year 1964 a son, Eldon, were born in the Prince George Hospital. At this time Glen had been working at various logging operations in B.C.

Janet and Glen built a house on the homestead and resided there for some time, as Glen purchased a four-wheel-drive tractor and breaking plow so he could do custom breaking in various parts of the Peace River Country.

Once when visiting this territory Janet and Glen had to leave their vehicle on the opposite side of the Bear Creek Coulee, when Janet's father met them on the other side. It was impossible to drive through the bridgeless coulee at that time.

In 1969 they returned to British Columbia, but they kept their land in the Peace Country. In 1973 they moved back to the Fourth Creek area. They bought the John Stetar farm and proceeded to build fences and corrals for their cattle operation. They now reside there with their two children and a multitude of animals.

Hedwig and John Wold

by Hedwig Wold

In 1927 at the age of 10, my sister and I came with our parents from Switzerland to Brooks, Alberta. My parents bought land south of Burdett, Alberta, and we lived there for almost three years.

We heard of land being opened up for homesteading in the Peace River country, so we headed north by train, and landed in Spirit River. My parents homesteaded in what is now Westmark.

When hauling feed from La Glace, I met my husband-to-be, John Wold, John had come from Norway in 1907 with his parents and brothers. He worked on farms, in coal mines, and sawmills during his



First House.

earlier years. My husband took his first homestead in 1912 at Buffalo Lakes.

We got married in 1935 and lived at Buffalo Lakes till 1955 where all our children were born.

We wanted more land that was clean, so in January 1955 we came to Blueberry Mountain and homesteaded north of there on S. ½-2-82-8. There were no roads, many sloughs to cross, and lots of mosquitoes.

One time some friends from Buffalo Lakes came up to visit us, and it started to rain. We had a Ford one-ton truck, so we went with them when they were leaving, to help them get through the sloughs and mud holes. It took us hours to get to the Blueberry Mountain store, and some of us were running low in gas, so we stopped at Roy Collins' and found a couple of gallons of gas, and left the money for it on the barrel. It took a week before we were able to get back to the homestead again. Our children and their Uncle Fred looked after the place, while John and I were away.

Fred, John's brother came in here with us. He also took a homestead and built a house on it. Fred brought in a small cat., and we cleared some land with it. Picking roots was one of the harder jobs, as it all had to be done by hand. Frost plagued us the first years, also a lot of snow in winter, and real cold weather.

Our oldest son Oluf got married to Bernice Gano. They have two children — a son Douglas, and a daughter Diane. They live on a farm close by. Our daughter Marie married Elwood Schultz, and they have two girls; Darlene and Carolyn. They bought the homestead when my husband could no longer look after the farm.

Our youngest son Walter, married Joyce Stetar and they have two boys: Robert and Jason. They live at Campbell River, B.C., on the Island.

My husband passed away the first part of December, 1979, and I still live in my own house in the same yard as Marie and Elwood.



G. Hewson and John Wold, 1957.



First Oil Rig to the southeast.



O. Wold cutting brush.



Dugout — our only water supply.

Yanishewski Family Heritage

by Wally Yanishewski

Fred Yanishewski came to Canada in 1929. He was born in 1900 and was 29 when he came to Canada. He was followed by his wife Alhefia a year later. They came over from the Ukraine with two children, Roman born in 1924, and Bernice born in 1926, and lived in Lamont, Alberta, just east of Edmonton. They moved there in 1929, and that was the year my dad, Walter, was born. Alex was born in Spirit River in 1932, when the Yanishewski family moved to Blueberry. Three more children were born after that, Steve in 1936, Emily in 1938, and Danny in 1940.

Walter quit school at the early age of fourteen. He had to quit to supply money for himself and the family. The job he had was working in the threshing gang for low wages or to pay for the threshing bill. At fifteen he started to drive crawler tractors. The Cats back in 1945 didn't have canopies, so the operator had to watch for falling trees when brush cutting. On

April 18, 1955, at the age of 25, he married Olga Rymer who was 19 at the time. Olga's parents names were Tom and Frances Rymer.

Their first born was Helen who was born on October 8, 1956, then Phyllis was born on August 11, 1958. This was the year Dad bought his first Cat. Another girl, Marilyn was born on June 20, 1960, then on April 14, 1964 the first boy, Walter was born. That year we moved from Spirit River to Fourth Creek, where we owned a half section of land. Later we accumulated another half section. Dad was well into Cat work until Mom wanted something to do, so we bought cattle, and slowly enlarged on that project.

I am presently attending grade ten in Savanna School. My sister Helen is in New Guinea teaching school. Phyllis married Joe Larsback in 1979 and is now living in Eureka River. Marilyn married Peter Dolen in 1979 and is now living in Fourth Creek. Mom and Dad celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on April 18th of this year.

Ksituan

Bilawchuk Family History by Gail and Karen Bilawchuk

In 1928 Matt Bilawchuk came to the Devale area from Manitoba looking for a homestead as he felt the farmland was better here. He went back to Manitoba for another year, then returned to Devale in 1929 with his wife Ann and their three children, George, Mary and Nick to settle on their homestead.

The conditions they found were few roads, rough trails and plenty of bush country. In 1929 they made their home in a tent until they built their first house in 1930. In order to get to town they had to cross two creeks and such trips were made on foot.

There really weren't any pleasures then, but they never really had anything tragic or unusual happen to them. When Matt first came he helped some of the newcomers settle.

Matt's first wife Ann died in 1933. He later remarried the same year to Mary Kucharuk of Volin, who had five children of her own: Steve, Walter, Jack, Ann, and Nettie. Matt and Mary later had four children of their own: Sophie, Peter, Johnny, and Billy.

In 1950 they started building a house on the quarter across the road from where they had been living, and moved into their new house in 1952. They lived there till the fall of 1958 then moved into a house they had built in Spirit River, and their son Peter took over the farm.

In July 1960 after living only two years in town Matt passed away. His wife Mary remained in town until her death in November of 1969.

Of Matt's first three children George passed away in August of '69, Mary lives in Grande Prairie, and Nick lives in Spirit River.

Mary's five children are Steve who lives in Spirit River, Walter in Prince George, B.C., and Ann, Jack, and Nettie in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Of Matt and Mary's four children Sophie lives in Ormand Beach, Florida, Peter on the home farm, Johnny in Spirit River, and Billy in Edmonton, Alta.

Bondar Family History

Steve Bondar was born September 7, 1897 in Mala, Poland, during the reign of the Czar. He was born on a farm which consisted of twenty-seven 2.5 acre parcels of land, totalling 67 acres. This was a mixed farm with horses, oxen, cattle, grain, and also an orchard. The land was worked by oxen and horses, but sown, cut, and threshed by hand. Steve was one of a family of nine; five girls and four boys. He went to a public school, and his education would be equivalent to Canadian grade eight.

Steve served six months in the Polish Army, and during 1914-18 while serving in World War I, was imprisoned by the Germans for three years. While there he worked in the forestry. After the war he married, and found work in a co-op type store.

It was during Steve's working days that he heard of people going to Canada, and this prospect looked very promising. Anyone emigrating had to pass a complete and strict examination. He applied for a passport and after overcoming some obstacles he arrived in Canada in 1928. After a boat trip across the ocean, and a train trip across Canada, he arrived in Edmonton without a job. Later he got a farm job at Elderslie, and during this time he attempted but failed, to bring his wife to Canada. Some time later he was informed that she had passed away due to pneumonia. On one of his trips to Edmonton he learned that there was work to be had in a coal mine at Leduc, and he found employment there for the next two years.

During his mine work Steve met Eva Sczerbiak who was born in Austria in 1905. Eva had three brothers and lived on a farm similar to that of Steve's family. In 1930, she came to Canada, to her uncle who owned the mine at Leduc and was fortunate that work was available on her arrival. Eva worked as a cook at the mine.

In the summer of 1929 Steve and some other men came to Spirit River to look for and file on a homestead. One man in the group could speak some English, and persuaded Steve to be taken by 'Cache

One' to look for a homestead. They paid for the trip with tobacco and whiskey. They camped one night enroute, then walked about six miles to what was to be Steve's homestead (now Devale area).

When Steve's application for homestead was approved, he cleared a spot of trees and used them to build a shack with thatched roof and dirt floor. The roof would drip for days after a rain. Later as homesteaders came into the area, they often stayed at this shack. In the winter Steve went back to the mine to work.

In 1930 Steve married Eva Sczerbiak and they came to Spirit River by train, then to his homestead. He had enough money to buy a cow, and a stove for the shack. That winter Steve went back to the mine to work, and in February he bought 4 horses and a wagon, and journeyed from Edmonton to Spirit River via Slave Lake. He had enough food for himself and for his horses, and \$25.00 in his pocket. This journey took two weeks, but he found hospitality in the High Prairie area and was given food and a place to rest. The horses were also looked after in a barn.

It was hard work to clear land by hand, break the land with horses, and pick roots. The grain had to be hauled by horses to Spirit River, via "Cache One", and this meant an overnight trip. During 1931 Peter was born (now lives on the homestead). These were difficult times, as most of the work was done by hand. Sometimes they ran short of water in the dug-out, and it had to be hauled from a creek. They caught rain water, and melted snow in the winter time. Eva always grew a garden and vegetables were stored for the winter. Berries were picked and preserved. Wild meat from deer, rabbit, and porcupine supplemented chicken and pork.

Later Steve built a larger log house, to which a lumber portion was added some years later. In 1933 Joe was born (he passed away in 1953), and Annie was born in 1934. She now lives in Grande Prairie with her husband Glyn Richards and family. Ted was born in 1936, and resides in Puerto Rico, South America, with his wife and daughter. Adam was born in 1939 and now lives in Summerland, B.C. with his wife and daughter.

During these busy years Eva did sewing and knitting for the children, plus helping Steve outdoors stooking and root picking. The children soon learned to do a lot of the work. In 1939 World War II started, and this was the year that the Ksituan School and Greek Orthodox Church were built. In 1940 Steve bought another quarter section, and lease-purchased one more.

Jack, who now lives in Peace River with his wife and two children, was born in 1942. Nick, the young-

est of the family was born in 1946, and he now lives in Camrose where he teaches school.

The children walked to the Ksituan School, 2½ miles away during the spring, rode horseback part time, and in the winter rode in a 'caboose' (a covered-in cutter with wood heater). One winter day the boys decided to race with another family, and as the horses hit a snow-pile we were left sitting in the caboose while the horses raced home. Good old days?

Times became better and Steve purchased a truck and tractor, which eased the hard work; also the boys were able to help more. In 1951 Steve and Eva separated, and Steve sold one quarter and moved to Edmonton. Eva continued to live on the farm with the children. In 1966 she sold the homestead quarter and moved to Spirit River in a home of her own, and lived there till she passed away of a heart attack in 1969. Steve lived in Edmonton until 1973 at which time he sold his rooming house and moved to Grande Prairie Central Park Lodge, where he still resides.

In 1969 Pete married Betty Symchuk (nee Kozenko), and they live on the family homestead.

Matt and Anne Hrychan

Matt Hrychan was born on November 1st, 1897 in Sarni, Ukraine, son of Stephen Hrychan and Pearl Broda. He was the second of six children; Peter, Matt, Katherine, Paul, Andrew and Annie. They all resided on a small amount of land, as was usually the case then. The likelihood of any substantial advancement for six children seemed very minimal.

At the age of 18, he joined the Austrian Military (Ukraine was under Austrian rule during that period in time.) He served in Italy for 16 months, then moved to the Carpathian Mountains between Romania and Russia. There he served in the Front Lines until the revolution in 1918. Masses of soldiers then boarded the mail cars heading towards home, only to be met by unrest between Ukraine and Poland. Matt then joined the Ukrainian movement where he served for 8 months before being captured by the Polish Army and sent to a Prisoner of War Camp at Scholkova. He remained there for one year under very adverse conditions. Daily rations were usually cheese infested with maggots, and small amounts of bread. Sometimes this was traded for cigarettes. The duration of confinement was mostly during the winter months with virtually no heat. Prisoners slept against one another for body heat. On very severely cold nights, the unfortunate prisoners at the edge froze to death by morning. When given ten days Easter leave, he decided not to return to the camp. As a result, he spent the next year in hiding, sleeping in mangers and hay lofts to escape detection. The com-



Soldier Matt.

munity protected him by sending messengers warning him that the Military Police were near by.

At this time the thought to migrate to Canada crossed his mind. Mr. Bill Yakimetz, a relative was already in Canada. Matt wrote to him to ask his help in obtaining an affidavit to immigrate to Canada. Matt's father borrowed the money required for the trip, and Matt bid his dear family good-bye, never to see any of them again, except Paul, who also came to Canada later.

Matt arrived in Halifax in June, 1926, and boarded a train that brought him to Edmonton, and then on to Waskatenau to the Yakimetz family. He encountered all the trials and tribulations that new arrivals did in those days. He spoke no English, had no money and suffered from loneliness. Many a time the thought of his family and friends back home made him wish for enough money to return to his homeland. However, being young and healthy, he

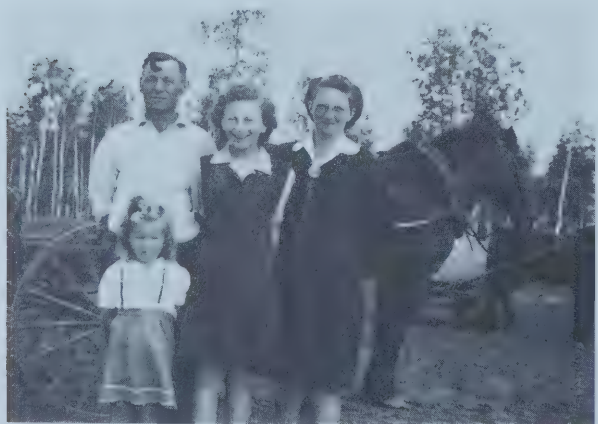
carried on and eventually learned the language, obtained work and began to love his new homeland. He worked as a farm labourer as well as any other jobs that were available around Edmonton, and with the railway in British Columbia around the Kamloops district.

Matt took out his first homestead in the Newbrook area but he later abandoned it as the land seemed unproductive. While there, he made many new acquaintances which he still has to this day. He played the clarinet and spent many an evening playing with friends at weddings and parties. He even earned a few dollars that way. However, later while in his new home in the Peace River area, he traded his faithful clarinet for a keg of nails that was needed when he had no money to buy them.

As the 1930's and the depression arrived, Matt and his friends Steve Letersky and Mike Paish decided to move to the Peace River district and file for homesteads. In 1930, at Spirit River, in an office run by Mr. Fildes, he filed for a homestead. He also obtained one for his brother Paul, whom he had sponsored to come to Canada, and who arrived in August, 1928. These homesteads were located in the Blueberry Mountain-Ksituan area. There were no roads, only tall trees and good land.

Eventually log houses were built on the 160 acres of bush. All the neighbours helped one another and the land had to be cleared by hand, particularly the road to the post-office at Blueberry Mountain, which was run by Mr. Mildrum. The first year Matt cleared 8 acres which was planted into wheat. After purchasing seed, paying the cost of threshing, there was a profit of 6¢ a bushel. The grain had to be hauled into Spirit River by horses and it was a two-day trip. When the house was built, a well was dug for a water supply. Thus a permanent home was finally established.

Anne Solomiany was born in October, 1912 in Saskatchewan, the fourth of six children; Irene, Bill,



Matt, Annie and girls in the '40's.



Family Picture.

Matt, Anne, Fred and Bernice. In 1931 Anne Solomiany arrived in the Whitburn area with her brother and sister-in-law, Bill and Mary Solomiany. Anne's parents John and Mary Solomiany settled there in 1929. They had left very dry conditions in the Cudworth area of Saskatchewan. Soon Anne got a job working for Mr. and Mrs. McCormick at their farm in Blueberry Mountain. Her pay was \$5 a month, but it went up to \$8 during the threshing season. The McCormick's later owned the Blueberry Mountain General Store which was a focal point for the community for many years to come.

In 1932 Matt and Anne got married. As Matt was the first of all the homesteading bachelors to get married, their home was always the stopping place for home cooked meals by a female, at last! As sure as Sunday morning would arrive, so would all the single neighbours; Sidney and Walter Jamison, Tony Shewchuk, John Kozij, brother Paul Hrychan and Anne's brothers Matt and Fred Solomiany. Anne was assured of a long day over the wood stove cooking such delicacies as moose, deer, rabbit, partridges, and usually pyrohi. Occasionally, some homebrew would accompany these tasty dishes. Sometimes they missed these visitors by escaping early on Sunday morning to visit her parents in Whitburn.

Usually, twice yearly a trip to Spirit River was made to purchase flour, sugar, salt coffee and other basic necessities. Livestock was slowly purchased from some neighbours by working at clearing their brush, also by hand. In the summer there was plenty of fruit which had to be picked by hand such as saskatoons, raspberries, strawberriers and blueberries as well as wild currants. The land was fertile and produced beautiful gardens and many a bumper crop in the years to come.

Although many hardships were endured, many good times and memories are treasured of time spent

singing, playing instruments, presenting plays and concerts, playing checkers in winter and spending countless hours playing horse shoes in summer. Other fond memories are of the picnics and dances held at the Blueberry Mountain, Whitburn and Ksituan halls. One would usually leave early in the morning by wagon, later by buggy, and come back early next morning after a night of dancing and singing.

Matt helped build the Ksituan Hall and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic church. Both were destroyed by fire and he helped rebuild them again. Both Matt and Anne were always active in the community, school and church. Their home was a stopping place for the clergy who served in the community for many years. In lieu of taxes, Matt helped build Ksituan school in 1931 at \$3 per day, and his children later attended this school.

The first child Ruth was born in 1935. She received a lot of attention from the single neighbours who came on Sundays, but for the rest of the week while Matt and Anne were busy clearing land, her companion and friendly guard was the dog Rinty. Ruth is now married to Ben Laskey of Edmonton, and they have two sons, Gregory and Christopher. Their second child, Mary was born in 1941 and is married to William Dwernychuk of Spirit River. They have three children, Randy, Deanne and Dean.

Matt and Anne moved to Spirit River in 1976 after selling their beloved homestead to Duncan and Karyn Bryson. Matt and Anne are still enjoying good health and are keeping active in the church and community as well as the Happy Hour Club, with time left for giving love and guidance to their grandchildren, as they did with their children.

Kowalchuk Family History

Michael Kowalchuk emigrated to Canada from the Ukraine in 1908 at the age of 15. He worked his way west till he arrived at Saskatchewan where he spent several years. He married Katherine Beck at Wroxtton, Saskatchewan in 1927. Mike came to the Ksituan district in 1929, to homestead near his brother-in-law, Walter Beck and his friend Nick Sopkow who had come earlier. His wife Katherine and their two children Frances and John followed later.

The trip "across the creeks", as it is generally known, was a long and hard one. There was only a trail, with no bridge over the creeks. Horses had to swim across with the wagons behind, as the water was very high then. It took a whole days journey to go to town.

The Kowalchuks had another son Victor in 1931. When the children reached school age they attended the Ksituan School. There was no road, just a trail to



Orchestra, 1930.



Four Generations.

school, and sometimes the children saw bears on their way.

In 1947, tragedy struck the family when their mother, Katherine passed away. Frances and John moved away, and Victor stayed in the district to farm. He married Jean Smakula who had come out to teach at Ksituan. She was the last teacher at Ksituan, as the school was consolidated with Blueberry Creek School in 1956. Victor and Jean have four children, David, Karen, Kim, and Greg.



V. Kowalchuk Family.

In 1977 Victor and Jean ventured into the business world, and opened a Small Engine Repair Shop in Spirit River. Their son David joined the family business in 1980.

Mike Kowalchuk, one of the pioneers of the Ksituan district passed away on January 7, 1980 at the age of 87 years. His son John pre-deceased him in the 1970's, when he was killed in a car accident in Algeria where he worked with the oil industry.

Nick Letersky Family

by Nettie

Nick Letersky was born in Delph, Alta, to John and Katherine Letersky. He attended Cladford School, which was three miles from home, then took his High School at Waskatenau which was six miles away. He walked there unless the weather was cold, when they used horses.

When Nick was through with school he decided to come to the Peace River Country. His brothers Steve and Joe had come a few years earlier and had filed on land in the Ksituan area.

Nettie Matkowski was born in Cudworth, Saskatchewan on September 24, 1926, to Peter and Irene Matkowski — the third of four children. The oldest daughter died in infancy, next was a son, Miro, then Nettie, and the fourth was a daughter, Ruth. Mother died in 1932 after a lengthy illness, leaving her young family. Father remarried, and a daughter, Benita was born to that marriage.

I came to Whitburn in November 1941 to visit my grandparents, John and Mary Solomiany, and found they were still threshing. The frozen fields enabled them to pick up the stooks at that time of the year. I helped the ladies (grandmother and Anne Hrychan)



Grandma Solomiany and Janet.



Aerial View of Letersky Farmstead.

cook for the threshers, and that was when I met my future husband, Nick Letersky. He and the Paish brothers owned the threshing machine.

Nick and I were married on November 22, 1942 at the Greek Catholic Church at Ksituan with Father Venyk officiating.

Community gatherings were the only source of entertainment in those days, whether it was picnics, ballgames, or dances. There were many musicians around, Mrs. Bernard, Graeme Thomlinson, Sid Jamison, Bill, Matt., and Fred Solomiany, Matt and Paul Hrychan, and in later years the Yanishewski Brothers. We always had a good time, and went home tired and happy.

Dora Waknuk kept the Post Office at Ksituan from 1935 to 1964. Whenever I went to get the mail Dora and I had coffee and a visit. She gave me currants for jelly when she had some extra, and they were sure appreciated. Shortly after we were married, another neighbor, Edith Gawryluk, gave me a hen with a batch of baby chicks. Edith had hens sitting in the loft of the chicken coop and was very successful hatching chicks. I'm afraid I just didn't have that touch, and we had to rely on Millers Hatchery in Edmonton for our chicks. What a chore it was bringing them home from Spirit River.

On February 20, 1948, a son, James Peter was

born. I had to stay in Spirit River to await the arrival of the baby because our only means of transportation was horses. Nick was notified of the birth of our son by the mailman, John Waknuk, and was in to town the next day to see baby.

Ten days later, we came home in a horsedrawn caboose which had a heater in it to keep us warm. Mr. Parlee, the teacher at Ksituan caught a ride with us. Nick's mother lived with us at the time. Her health was failing and she was happy to see her grandson. She died of cancer three weeks later.

On June 28, 1951 our daughter, Janet Arlene was born. Nick and Jim were able to come in to see us right away, because Nick had purchased a truck in 1949. Jim was very happy to have a sister.

Very soon after the arrival of his sister, Jim was off to school at Ksituan. His first teachers were Wilma Bush and Jean Smakula (Kowalchuk later). The men had to take the children to school with horses. Our neighbor Matt Hrychan, and Nick took turns delivering Mary and Jim to school. In the summer they would ride horseback or take their bicycles. As they got older, they would take the horse and cutter, and if Daisy didn't feel like going to school that day, she would turn around and bring them back home.

Grandmother Solomiany lived with Matt and



Family Group.



Jim and Carolyn.



Jerry and Janet.



Letersky Grandchildren.

Anne Hrychan. Our children used to love to listen to her tell stories about her homeland. They learned to understand and speak Ukranian from her. She and Janet spent many hours doing needlework and visiting.

In 1954 Nick bought a combine from Jack Bird and the threshing machine was retired. What a relief not to have to cook for a threshing crew! Nick and the Paish boys owned the threshing machine and planer. Nick planed a lot of lumber with that planer, and spent quite a few weeks in the Fourth Creek area planing.

In 1957 Janet started school at Blueberry Creek, but by that time there were school buses in the area, which made those trips easier. In the winter of 1959 Jim fell ill with meningitis. Nick brought Miss Ferrier, the Public Health Nurse to see him, and we rushed him to the hospital in Spirit River. He was in a coma for a week and his left side was paralyzed. It was such a relief when he opened his eyes. The nuns allowed us to stay at the hospital with him. We were very thankful to our neighbors for doing our chores, looking after Janet, and for all their help and kindness.

Up until that time we had been living on Nick's brother Steve's farm. Nick bought a quarter section just west of that property and we started building our own home in 1959, complete with electricity, and a year later running water. Then we started planting

shrubs and spruce trees. They were so tiny that we really had to check to make sure we planted them right side up. All the years of tender loving care produced beautiful big trees and hedges.

We had a near tragedy one morning when Nick went out to water the strawberries. He stood between the wheels of the tractor, accidentally pulled the clutch, and the rear wheel of the tractor drove over him. We still have the same tractor, and he still waters the strawberries the same way.

Centennial year was special to us because we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary that year. We were happily surprised by all our friends and family having a lovely party for us.

Jim graduated from high school in 1964, and Janet graduated in 1969.

I started working at Birds Store in 1967. Over the years quite a few changes took place at the store; Jack Bird died in 1973; the store burned down and we moved into the old Whitburn School building. In 1979 Wilma Bird sold the business to the Graham Brothers and they built a new store two miles west of the old site.

In April 1973 Jim married Carolyn Flanders, and in October 1978 she gave birth to a son Dallas James. Janet married Jerry Tizzard in December 1973. They have two daughters, Allison Rae born January 1978 and Roberta Lee born June 1979. They all live in Grande Prairie, so we're able to see our grandchildren often — a great joy to us as grandparents.

We are still quite active and not ready to retire. We enjoy the farm life very much and are comfortable.

Jim and Sheila McLachlan

Jim was born in Dunvegan in 1919, and lived there until he joined the army in 1939. He had taken a homestead in Dell when he was 18, and this he sold when he returned from overseas. Jim came back to Canada and the Fairview area in 1945, and bought a farm southeast of Bluesky.

In 1949 he took the homestead in Wonderland and he worked on this half section part-time during the summers of 1950 and '51. In October of 1951 he married Sheila Rolling of Bluesky and they lived in Fairview that winter while Jim worked in a grain elevator there.

In 1952 they spent 2½ months working on the homestead in the summer and the winter was spent in Dawson Creek, again working in an elevator. The following summer was spent on the homestead trying to get enough land cleaned up to make their living off the farm. Their first daughter (Sherill, married to Bernie Day of Gordondale) was born in the fall of 1953, and they moved to Gage that winter for work.

The next summer was spent on the homestead, and the winter working at a lumber camp north of Fairview. A second daughter (Diane, married to Chester Morrison of Rycroft) was born in the spring of 1955 and the family moved to Wonderland to stay. A school was being built on the northwest corner of their land that fall, but didn't open till the next year. The teachers at Wonderland were Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Campbell, and Mr. Wlad. The school was closed in 1960, and the students bused to Blueberry Creek.

Jim, Sheila, and the two girls lived in a one room log shack which had plenty of mice. Sheila used to target practice with the .22 rifle at the mice. It got a bit rough on a roasting pan on the wall, but the mice got scarcer.

In the fall of 1956 they bought a larger log house, from south of Yellow Creek and moved it home and built a lean-to on it. Jim worked on the Dunvegan bridge when it was being built, to help with money for more land clearing. They always had a few cows and pigs, also chickens, which helped the money situation.

The next years were spent in farming and clearing land. The biggest job was picking the roots. In 1957, a third daughter (Peggy, married to Ted Gano of Fourth Creek) was born, and in 1960 a fourth daughter (Judy, married to Karl Senner of Fourth Creek) arrived.

Time passed with lots of work and not much money, but always lots to eat as the hunting and gardens were good. In the spring of 1964, a son was finally born (Dawson). Jim said then he had a perfect poker hand of 4 queens and a joker. In fact, Dawson was called Joker for quite some time.

In 1965, the homestead was sold to Mike Dobish, and the family moved to Gordondale where they bought the store. Another son (Kerry) was born here in 1968, and Jim took another homestead at Gordondale, which the two boys now own.

Jim passed away in April of 1979, and Sheila and the boys still own and operate the store and Post Office in Gordondale. Sheila now has six grandchildren.

Hazel Paish **by Dennie Shmyr**

I, Hazel Wearing, arrived in Blueberry Mountain in August of 1943. I came from Kinuso where I had spent a month as a District Nurse. There was an outbreak of chicken pox, measles, and scarletina, making me a day late in arriving in Spirit River. Due to this fact, my ride to Blueberry Mountain was not there. There were no trains, buses, telephones, nor any other communication between Blueberry and



John Paish and Grandmother.



Hazel and John, 1945.

Spirit River. I looked around until I found someone, "the barber" whom I was able to hire for five dollars to take me out. My directions were completely turned around when I arrived.

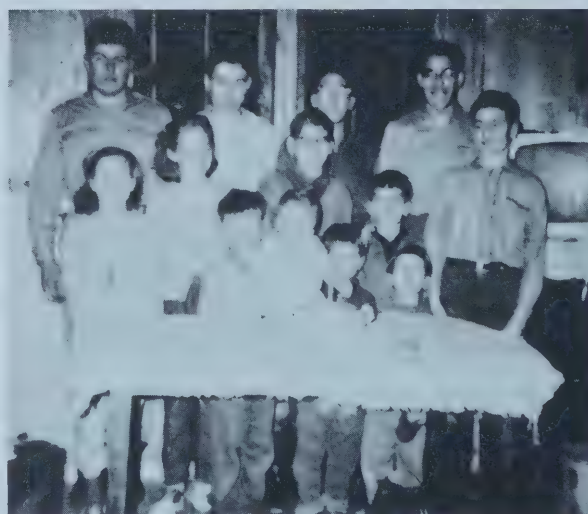
The Nurse's Residence consisted of a small office containing the basic necessities in the line of medications, also an examining table and a desk. The rest of the bungalow consisted of bedroom, front room, kitchen, and storage area. It was nicely furnished with the necessities; pots and pans, dishes and cutlery, chesterfield and chairs, bed, cook stove, and

heater. The wood was supplied by the people of the district, as was the pile of sawdust which covered the snow. This was the water supply for the winter.

Water could be carried from a dugout approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile away. It was while getting water from this dugout that I saw my first moose, and, not having any idea what it was, I was terrified.

Office hours were from 8 to 5, but of course, the nurse was "on call" any time of day or night. Wages were \$113 per month, with \$20 deducted for rent of the cottage. When a house call was needed, the patient was required to supply transportation to and from the cottage. This transportation could be any form, but it was usually a two or four-wheeled wagon, Bennett buggy or a buggy. Sleighs were used in wintertime. Drugs required were at a nominal cost, usually the wholesale price of the drug. Office calls were free.

When schools opened, I discovered that no inoculation nor vaccination had been done for many years, so this was my first priority. There were five schools in my territory: Blueberry Mtn., Blueberry Creek, Yellow Creek, Ksituan, and Gordondale. To do these schools I rented a horse for my travels. Ksituan and Yellow Creek were done on Mondays as each of them had approximately fifty children. Blueberry Creek was Tuesday as they had 80-90 children. Blueberry Mountain was Wednesday morning. Wednesday afternoon and Thursday were spent at the office, then Thursday night I left for Gordondale to be there when school opened Friday morning. Any pre-natal work was done in Gordondale at this time. Then back home Friday evening. I still marvel at the co-operation of the people of the district, pre-school children were brought in for miles by wagon from the surrounding areas.



Alice's first birthday.

The course of inoculations took weeks to complete. I only had forty needles, so these had to be cleaned, sharpened, and boiled between times. It became quite disheartening to cook a meal, as one never knew when it would be eaten. However, one baking of bread was saved by taking it with me to be baked.

Bedbugs were one of the worse pests of that time. They could be carried unwittingly from house to house in clothes or purses. Their size before feasting is about the size of a pin head, but after gorging themselves on blood they can be the size of a large pea. Many methods were used to rid houses these pests, mostly coal oil or sulphur. I did the residence at least once a month, just to be sure. These pests thrive in log houses where there are numerous places for them to hide.

During the winter, if I was called out, all water would have to be dumped or it would be frozen on my return. Also any medication which might freeze had to be taken along, so these were kept permanently packed. Maternity cases sometimes required 2-3 days, or else many times everything was over when I arrived, except to cut the cord and clean up. Few of these women experienced complications, due, I suppose to the active healthy life they led. I do not remember which was the first baby I delivered in this area. There was no pre-natal nor post-natal work done at this time. It was just a case of someone rapping at the door and asking me to come and deliver a baby for a woman whom I had probably never seen before. This is understandable when one considers the lack of communication at the time.

During January and February the Blueberry Creek School had no teachers, so I obtained correspondence courses for six of the children whose parents did not want them to miss any schooling. I

assisted them in the forenoons in the front room of the cottage.

Then I met the man who was later to become my husband, in the fall of 1943. He, William Paish, along with three of his brothers, had taken up homesteads in the Blueberry Creek district. As everyone who has tried it knows, a homesteader's life is rugged, but there is a great sense of accomplishment in the experiences. We were married in the fall of 1944, and lived in a small but cosy log house on Mike Paish's homestead. We had very little machinery, but were able to work the land quite adequately. Each winter the trees had to be hauled, piled, and sawed to provide wood for the coming years. Bill worked in his brother Pete's sawmill every winter. Lumber was a very important commodity, as there were always granaries and barns, etc., to be built, and we were looking forward to buildings our own frame house.

During these years, all land clearing was done by hand. John, who was born in 1945, was taken with us in a basket, placed in the shade of a bush, where he remained for the day, while we did the brushing, root picking, fencing, or whatever had to be done. Luckily, he was a very happy, healthy baby. Our means of transportation was either a Bennett buggy or a wagon.

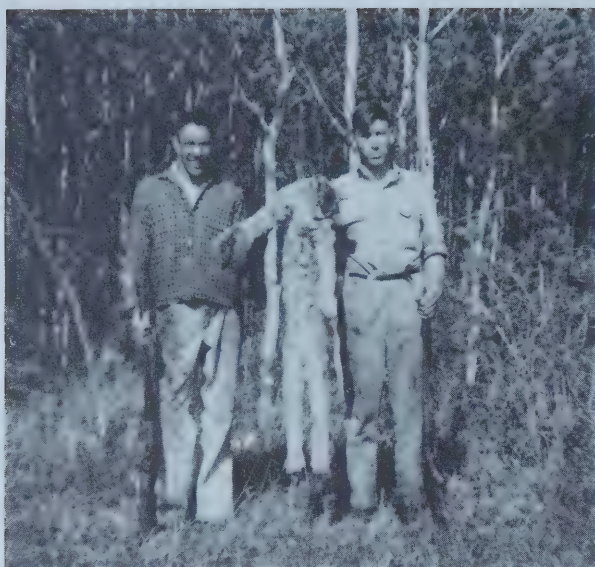
Much of our time was spent clearing land on our own homestead two miles away. Bill would cut the brush and I would pile it. Then, when it became somewhat dry we would burn it. After that came the job of breaking the land which also had rocks on it, so rocks had to be picked.

Water was obtained the same way as at the cottage — dugout, snow, and ice. Washing was done by hand with a scrub board and boiler. Jim was born the next year and Bill's mother came to live with us. She baby-sat the children, leaving us more freedom to come and go. In this way, we were able to put in longer days at clearing land. One day when we came home Bill's mother informed us that they had been visited by a bear. The boys were outside in their cribs when the bear was seen standing on his hind legs looking down on the children. She scared it away by banging pots and pans, waving rags, and yelling. The bear ate all the homemade soap which had been put out to dry, tore down the roost in the chicken house, but did not touch the chickens nor baby pigs.

Flour and porridge meal were homemade. Wheat was ground in the grain hopper, then sifted. The fine meal was used to make flour and the coarse part for porridge. Gardens produced a very important component of the diet. Meat consisted of moose, pork, chicken and fish. The cows produced the milk which was used for fluid milk, cottage cheese, cheese, and butter. We always kept chickens for meat and eggs.



Paish boat in spring flood.



Mike, Jim, and bobcat.

We were almost self sufficient. Things such as coffee, sugar, butter, etc., were rationed during the war years, but we would not have used nearly all the permitted supply. As a result we were able to give our coupons for sugar to those who were making moonshine, although this was never mentioned during the deal. Chicory was added to the coffee to make it go further.

Finally our house on our own homestead was finished and we were ready to move in. The Ksituan Hall was in a corner of the land. The house was also small, but it was our own and on our own land. We had barns to build, fences to set up, and many things to do.

Life changed little until John was eight years old, making it imperative that he go to school. With Bill in the bush every winter, and younger brother and sister who could not be left alone, it was impossible for me to take them to school. It became imperative for us to get a piece of land which was closer to a school, so we bought the "Glowaski" place and moved over there. The children, John, Jim, and Mike were able to walk to school, which was only ¼ mile away. Nellie Bryzgorni supervised correspondence courses there at this time. The next year we had a fully qualified teacher.

By this time, I had a gas powered washing machine, thereby making life much easier, as there were now seven children — six boys and one girl. John was doing many of the chores and Jim was able to give much help in the house and in the garden.

There was still land clearing and root picking to do, but we were able to have some of it done by machinery. A few years later too, the school buses

were running and we bought another quarter of land and moved back to the homestead. We also bought another quarter of land from Gus Roth.

The children made themselves a Golf Course and their own golf clubs, so many pleasant afternoons were spent playing "golf". One Sunday morning we spotted a bobcat so the boys went out to find it. Luckily they shot it before it could do any harm. By this time there were ten boys and two girls in the family. The house was much too small, so we started a building which was to be used as a house until we had a large house built, then used as a shop. Owing to the fact that electricity had come to the district, this shop was completely wired and had electric lights in it, which was something we had never had before. Light had previously been provided by coal oil and gas lamps. The house had an upstairs, and at first, only a ladder that fell directly to the floor.

Luckily for our family, despite the falls from trees, buildings, and other accidents, including a 30-30 gun going off and making a hole right through the house, and an overheated stove which burned out one partition of the house, we had no very serious nor lasting disabilities.

The year before Alice was born we moved into our new "house", and now that we had a bigger house we didn't have to have more than two to a room. By this time there were ten boys and three girls, and also by this time we had a refrigerator to keep the milk cool. Until now, the milk, cream, and butter had been kept lowered into a well which was filled with water each winter and allowed to freeze solid. We had also purchased two more washing machines at sales, so the washing could be done much more rapidly.

We still had the outdoor biffy, but did purchase a bathtub, so the children could get through their baths much more rapidly than by using the washtub. Sunday night, after the children had gone to bed, their clothes were washed and dried on clothes lines strung across the kitchen over the cookstove and heaters — to have them ready for the eleven children who were going to school at this time.

We dug the basement for the house that was to be, bought the windows and doors, and were ready to start our "dream house" when adversities struck. Crop failure followed crop failure, caused by floods, snow, frost, and drought, so the house never did get built and we continued to live in the "shop". One year our whole land was covered by water, so the children built a boat of plywood and went sailing on their own "lake". We hung wallpaper and put down linoleum, making things much more homelike. Any spare time was taken up by sewing, knitting and patching. In the spring of 1969, when Alice was in

Grade 1, many of the family had left home to make their varied homes, I was offered the opportunity of going back to nursing. This I accepted, and am now living and working in Grande Prairie.

Many might think the sort of life we led on the farm would be very drab and uninteresting, but I would not have exchanged it for the life of anyone else I know.

John married "Helga" with five children. He farms in the Ksituan area on the former Harry Glowaski farm. He works on the rigs for the winter months.

Jim married "Debbie" with two sons. They live in St. Albert. He is a licensed mechanic and shop foreman in Edmonton.

Mike married "Janice", and they live in Edmonton. He is an E.T.S. driver.

Ronald—nicknamed Orval, is single and lives in Edmonton. He is driving for a lumber company.

Clifford married "Louise" with two sons. They live in Edmonton. Cliff owns his own cab and works for Yellow Cab.

Victor lost his wife Judy in 1977. He lives and works in Slave Lake in the winter months and in summer works and farms in High Prairie.

Laura married Richard Driver and they live in Grande Prairie. She is employed by the Post Office as a mail carrier.

Irene, nickname Rene, married Dan Keating and they live in Grande Prairie. They have two children, a boy and a girl. Rene is a housewife and mother, and part-time employee at the hospital.

Elgin is single, and he and his partner Lawrence Gates are farming outside of High Prairie. They are also running Mohawk Car Wash and Service Station in High Prairie.

Joe is single and lives in Grande Prairie. He drives for Canadian Linen Supply.

Robert is single and lives in Grande Prairie. He is working in a warehouse.

Ken is single and lives in Grande Prairie. He is a carpenter's helper.

Alice lives at home in Grande Prairie. She is in Grade XII, and plans on continuing studying to become a lawyer.

Robert and Edith Parlee **by Edith Parlee**

In 1943 my husband R. E. Parlee accepted the position of teaching at Ksituan School. We moved with our family then, Bob, Jock; (whose real name is Jonathon), Michael and baby Miriam. We were a little late in arriving, as it was October or early November. We soon made many fine friends whom



R. Parlee and Ksituan School Children (1946).



R. Parlee and Ksituan School Children.

we remember even though that was some 37 years ago.

The Ksituan School almost burst its walls with 50 active students, but my husband kept them busy. One means of correcting misbehavior was an outside activity, sawing cord wood to keep the big stove partly supplied in winter months. I do believe it was more fun sawing off blocks than doing indoor studies. They worked like beavers.

My husband worked many long hours late at night correcting papers etc. He loved those kids and was concerned that they learn not only from the books, but how to live right wherever they were.

To help along with some scanty lunches after very long walks to school, we decided to make a big kettle of vegetable and meat bone soup. The children were allowed so much money per pound for vegetables or meat they brought, then had money to pay a few cents per cup of nourishing soup. They got this soup every day, and on wash days I made a canner full of hot cocoa. I believe they brought milk for this.

We used to have a little time of singing and Bible Stories one day a week which all enjoyed. I played



R. Parlee children: Jock, Bob, Michael and Miriam.



Mrs. Gawryluk and children with Mrs. Parlee and children.

my guitar for this special time. We took the last half hour of Thursday or Friday as a rule. As soon as our little girl could walk, the girls at school used to enjoy taking her out to pick strawberries. I tried to select a different couple or more each day to take her out. Another activity they enjoyed was putting on Christmas Concerts. It was a yearly event enjoyed by parents and friends.

In 1946 we closed the doors on the books, and bade sad farewells to the children we learned to love and their kind parents who invited us out to wonderful Ukrainian meals we enjoyed so much.

My husband and I and the family moved back to our home place, and finally to Sexsmith, Alberta where I now live. He passed away in 1967 after serious surgery and long illness. I will always remember and cherish the happy memories, and friends whom we met at Ksituan, Alta.

Tony and Lena Shewchuk Family

Tony was born in the province of Volin, Ukraine, in a little village by the name of Krasnosile, where they lived under the Russian Nationalists. His parents were Russian, although they spoke Ukrainian.

Tony came to Canada at the age of 19, as due to the crowded conditions, no work or farm land was available in his homeland. His father Nick, was killed in the 1st World War, and as Tony was very young when his Dad left, he never really knew him. There was a family of five, and Tony attended Public School for five years, learning Russian.

He sailed for Canada in 1929, on a ship called the S.S. United States, which landed in Halifax on April 1st. On his way west he stopped off in Saskatchewan, then at Edmonton, working at several jobs along the way in logging camps and for the railroad, to make enough money to carry on. He did some farming until 1936, then came to Spirit River and filed on a homestead for the sum of \$10.00, at Blueberry Mountain, SE 1-80-8-W6. His neighbours were Paul Hrychan, Nick Letersky, Matt Hrychan, and Pete Paish. They helped him build a house and clear some acres of land.

After spending seven years on the land, Tony was called into the Canadian Army, July 1943, so he rented his land to Nick Letersky and off he went. Upon his discharge in April of 1946 he returned to the



Shewchuk Home 1964.



Immigrants from Poland.

homestead. He also bought more land, S½ 29-79-7-W6 for the amount of \$308.00, which was a considerable sum in those days. With the help of his neighbors, a couple of tractors, and a Cat, he moved his house to the new location.

On August 5th, 1951 he married Lena Prystupa in Sexsmith. Lena was originally from the Volin district, near Rycroft, and later lived in the Sexsmith district. Two children were born, Jim in 1952 and Donna in 1953.

Tony bought an Oliver tractor, then after a few years got a bigger one, a W.6. There were lots of roots to pick, logging to be done, etc. but it wasn't all work. The people made their own entertainment; moonshine was brewed for the dances and parties held in Whitburn or Ksituan Halls. At threshing time, everyone helped one another, and the grain was hauled to Mr. Weberg at the National elevator in Spirit River. It was usually hauled by sleigh in the winter, which made it easier for the horses, and the route taken was via the Blueberry Mtn. road, to avoid the big creeks.

Time brought progress, with better roads and motor vehicles replacing the horses. The only horses retained were used for riding. Jim married Judy



Shewchuk Family.

Moojelski of Spirit River, and they reside at Clairmont, Alberta. Donna married Klaus Isele of the Northmark district. They lived in B.C. for a few

years, returning the summer of '76 and taking over the farm from Tony, when he and Lena retired to Grande Prairie.

The Charles Smyth Family **by Madge Smyth**

Both Charles and I were born in the U.S.A., Charles in North Dakota, and Madge Pierce in Wisconsin. Our families came to Canada where Charles and I met, and we were married at Lacombe in 1926. We settled at Endiang, Alberta, and our family of three boys and four girls were born in that vicinity. We had two sets of twins: two girls Edna and Evelyn: and Gerry and Judy.

In the spring of 1947 Charles came north looking for land, and took a homestead lease on the N.E. ¼-8-80-5. He also went into the School Division to enquire about teaching vacancies, as I wanted to keep on teaching till we were established on the farm. I was offered a teaching job at Yellow Creek, and in the summer I came to Spirit River by train with the five youngest children, Arnold, Edna, Evelyn, Judy, and Gerry.

We arrived in Spirit River in the morning, and after breakfast I spent the forenoon shopping. I was quite surprised to find I could purchase everything I needed in food, clothing, and hardware. That afternoon a neighbor, Earl Hoover, piled us, along with my purchases and baggage, into a truck and brought us out to the teacherage where some children were already waiting to greet us. It was after the first frost, and the country was really beautiful, especially through the creeks.

Charles and Jean drove up in November with the Model A., and Ted stayed at Endiang until spring when we shipped a car up to Rycroft. This was household furniture, vegetables, some of the ma-

chinery, and livestock. We had another car with the rest of our things later.

We got the use of the buildings in Matt. Baduik's place, and moved in until we could build. We had a tent on the farm with a slab roof built in front and against the tent, with a fire pit for cooking. This way we lived, travelling back and forth a great deal, working on the land and getting a house built. The men had taken out logs in winter and had them sawed at the local mill at Blueberry Mountain. This gave us lumber to build our house.

Water was a main concern. We had to have a dam dug, but until then we had to haul water with a tank. The first winter we melted snow in a half barrel tank for the animals.

Our land was considered easy clearing, so we started by hand slashing, piling, and burning. Then Ted built a piler from planks and bolts, to push with the tractor, which made the job much easier. Later of course, we got clearing done with small outfits hiring out.

The family grew up. The girls moved away; Judy after she finished school, the others later on. She, Mrs. James Brennan now lives in Kamloops, B.C. with her family of two girls and one boy. Jean married Walter Dorig and they had two sons, Larry and Glen. Jean now lives in Clearbrook, B.C.

Evelyn Blimke had two girls and two boys, and she now lives at Camrose, Alta.

Edna Kozakawich has two girls and four boys in her family at Spirit River.

The boys, Ted, Arnold and Gerry all farm here. Arnold married Carol Larson of Eaglesham, and they live on the farm. They have two children, Terry and Dale.

Ted married Flora Sandemann Allen, and Gerry is still single.

Altogether we have seventeen grandchildren.



C. Smyth in front of Blueberry Creek School.



C. Smyth Family, 1954.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Waknuk

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Walknuk left Smoky Lake in 1930 to move to the homestead (Mr. Waknuk having filed on land in the Ksituan district in 1929 for himself and his three sons.) They shipped two box cars of stock and household goods — the stock consisting of eight horses, three cows, some sheep and some chickens.

The family came by Model T Ford, and the Dolhan family of seven, also with the Model T Ford, came with them. The roads were very muddy as it was the spring run-off. However, after about four days from Edmonton, they all arrived in Spirit River. They waited for the box cars to arrive, then unloaded stock etc., and left for their homesteads. It was 15 miles across the two deep creeks, and took 3½ days to reach their destination.

Bill Waknuk married Ann Zeyha in 1935. They had one daughter Mary; a cheerful pleasant girl, who always has a smile for everyone. They continued to live on the homestead until 1946 when they bought Ben Nyes farm near Spirit River and continued farming there. Spirit River had no water supply in those days, and Bill hauled water to town from a spring fed well on his farm till the fall of 1955 when the town got its own water supply.

In 1955 he got a job working in the Drug Store for the late Dr. F. M. Law, but still continued farming as well, till the fall of 1963 when he sold out and moved to town. He continued working in the Drug Store until the last day of April 1980 when he decided to retire and do more travelling with the family.

Bill and Ann are well-known for the beautiful flowers they grow; peonies, begonias, and roses, as well as other garden varieties.

The Waknuks

by Dora Waknuk

In November of 1929, a group of Ukrainian people from Smoky Lake, Alberta, heard about good land in the Peace River country available for homestead. Mr. George Chahley, Mr. Steve Dolhan, Wm. Melenchuk, Alex Waknuk, and John Waknuk all went and filed on homesteads northwest of Spirit River, Alberta.

In 1930, they all moved and settled on their new land. They moved some machinery and livestock by freight train, and it was then we all realized what we were up against. Alex, Helen, Bill, Nick, Dora and Sophie Waknuk drove to Spirit River in an old Model T Ford. John and I stayed behind and came to Spirit River by train with a little baby girl 20 days old. It was May 24th when Alex and Bill Waknuk drove in with a wagon and four horses to take us to our homestead, and it took us 16 hours from Spirit River

to our homestead. The road was just terrible; nothing but stumps and big mud holes. We had to stop on the road to check if the baby was still alive as the wagon was shaking, but she was sleeping most of the time.

When we got to the homestead they had already built a shack 12'x14' of lumber, so when John and I came, there were nine of us sharing that shack. When night came, out went the table, benches and what not, and beds were made on the floor. Soon they built another shack and we were able to move some beds in. Talk about mosquitoes and sandflies that year! The smudge was burning 24 hours a day.

We never really realized what a homestead was; not an acre of land broken, no garden, and believe me, we never tasted water from a slough before, as we had nice well water in Smoky Lake. It was then the tears were falling day in and day out, and we all wished we had our good well water and some vegetables to eat. If it hadn't been for wild game, we would probably all have starved.

We cleared some land and a nice big place for a garden, so in 1931 we had all kinds of vegetables. Believe me I never ate such good potatoes in all my life. We threshed 170 bushels of wheat from our first crop and we were able to sell 60 bushels for \$11.00. This bought us 2 pairs of low rubbers, a sack of flour, some salt and sugar. John worked on a threshing machine for \$2.50 a day. He spent a month travelling back and forth. When it rained he had to come back home until the grain dried up and was fit to thresh. He earned \$25.00, so our income for 1931 was \$36.00.

On Sundays we exchanged visits with Dolhans and Melenchuks. All the newcomers built log shacks and plastered them with mud, then white washed them with lime. It sure was nice to move to a place where the heat never escaped and the mosquitoes stayed out.

In 1935 we got a Post Office which was named Ksituan. At first we kept it in our house, then we



Waknuk first home.

added a place on to our house, and moved the Post Office into it. We had about 70 householders getting mail every Saturday, as the mail went out Friday and came in Saturday. With all the mud around us, believe me, many a Saturday night I'd scrub the unpainted floor with home made lye, which we made by pouring water over the stove ashes then used the liquid as a strong detergent. The salary from the start, for keeping the Post Office was \$100.00 a year. We were paid every three months, but then it got better as the years went by. We had the Post Office for 29 long years. Now there is a mail route and the people get their mail three times a week.

One Sunday John, his sister Sophie (now Mrs. Dave Ross) and I decided to go and pick some saskatoons. We had a two-wheeled cart which John built from his old Model T Ford. We hitched up 2 horses, and when one of the wheels went up on a stump, John started to fall off and tried his best to hold on to me. When I saw there was no way I could drag him up, I just pushed him down, and he sat in a big mud hole. He weighed 175 lbs. and I about 100, so there was no way I could pull him. We spent that day laughing about that incident, which none of us forgot.

We had a family of five — three boys and two girls. The oldest of the family is Helen. She is now Mrs. John Chahley and has been teaching school since she was 18 years of age. William T. and Tom are farming, but in a much different way that we started. They have big machinery and lots of land. They are doing everything the modern way, while we sure started the hard way.

Tom and his family live in our old home, while William T. and his family live in town. Patricia, now Mrs. Eric Hansen, lives in Grande Prairie and works at the court house. Eric is managing the North American Van Lines. George is with us.

We quit farming in 1967, bought a home in Spirit River, and are spending our old age here. This sum-

mer, on June 20th we celebrate our golden wedding, and believe me if we had to re-live what we went through we would say 'no thanks', as the start of our homesteading was terrible. Many a night we were too hungry to sleep. If this young generation had to go through what we went through I don't think they could stand it. God only knows what we went through.

Wawrenuik History

My grandfather, Peter Wawrenuik came to Canada with his family from a small village in Poland. They left in March 1929, transported the family of seven and all their belongings, by two wagons, a distance of 45 kilometers to a railway station. They boarded the train and travelled across Poland to the port city of Gdansk. All took medical examinations and boarded a Canadian ship which would take them across the Atlantic to Canada, with hopes of getting a better living for themselves and especially for the children.

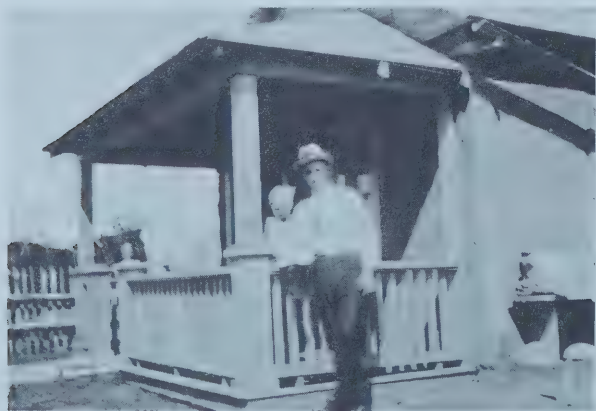
The Atlantic voyage took eleven days; several of those being very unpleasant due to rough seas. Most of the passengers were sick for four or five days. The last two days the sea calmed and they arrived at the port of Quebec. Here again they went through an examination and were driven to a railway station where they boarded a passenger train that would take them west to Edmonton, Alberta, a three day trip. Here they spent three days in the Immigration Building where they decided to go on to the Rycroft area in search of a homestead.

They picked a homestead fifteen miles north of Rycroft, in the Volin district, where they built a house and cleared some land for a garden. Times were very difficult during the depression. Work for wages was hard to find. Wages were only 75 cents a day, and 5.00 a month in the winter.

Later on, conditions improved greatly. They farmed for many years in the area, and raised a family of six children — two sons and four daughters. The oldest son and his wife met with a tragic death in 1965. The other son farms the home place. All have their own children. The grandparents left the farm and moved to the town of Spirit River in 1964. They still reside there, looking after their own garden. They receive the Old Age Pension and are very content.

1) Мій дід Петро Вавренюк приїхав з родиною до Канади з Волині, що тоді належала до Польщі, зі села Верещаки.

2) Виїхали з дому 1929 року в місяці червні, залишили всю рідню, друзів і знайомих в селі, де народилися. Везли нас 2 фіри 45 кілометрів



John and Helen.

до станції Кременець, а їхало нас 7 осіб та й увесь маєток наш.

3) В м. Кременці сіли ми на поїзд і переїхали всю Польщу. Зупинилися ми в портовім місті Гданську, там перейшли лікарські оглядини, а тоді всіли на канадійський корабель, котрий називався „Метагама” і попливли через океан аж до Канади.

4) Їхали до Канади з надією покращати собі життя, а особливо дітям, бо життя під Польщею було дуже тяжке; польський уряд гнобив українців скільки міг, накладав великі податки і переслідував на кожному кроці.

5) Плили ми 11 днів: 3 дні плили несогірше, на четвертий день море почало показувати свою силу, а п'ятого дня кораблем почало підкидати на всі боки, як скринькою від яблук. Люди послабли так, що мало хто виходив зі своїх кімнат, бо більша частина людей лежала й не могла голови піднести. Аж дев'ятого дня нашої подорожі море стало втихати і люди почали виходити з кімнат на палубу, щоби вдихнути свіжого повітря. Десятого дня море зовсім притихло і 11-го дня приплили ми до Канадійського порту Квебек.

В Квебеку перейшли знову лікарські оглядини, а після того відвезли нас на станцію, посадили на поїзд і повезли на Захід. Третього дня прибули ми до Едмонтону в Альберті.

В Едмонтоні завели нас до Еміграційного будинку, де ми перебули 2 дні, а на третій день прийшов урядовець СПР Компанії і хотів нас завести на компанійні фарми, щоб ми купували там землю. Ми, однак, не погодилися, бо знали, що Канадійський уряд дає „гомстед” 160 акрів за 10 дол.

Третього дня сіли ми на поїзд в Едмонтоні і поїхали 350 миль на північний захід, до місцевості Райкрофт. П'ятнадцять миль на північ від Райкрофт, в місцевості Волинь, взяли „гомстед”, збудували хатину і почали рубати і корчувати ліс, щоб виробити трохи землі на город.

Тяжке було життя на „гомстеді”, почалась економічна криза, не було де дістати роботи, а як пощастило десь дістати роботу, то платня була мізерна — 75 центів на день. А в зимі платили 5 доларів на місяць і то мало кому траплялася робота. Все ж таки пережили ті тяжкі часи і стало жити краще. Але прийшли старші роки, підупало здоров'я. В 1964 р. купили хату в місті і перебралися жити до міста Спірит Ривер.

Виховали 6 дітей — 2 сини і 4 дочки. Старший син загинув трагічною смертю з дружиною 1965 р., одна дочка живе в Америці — має сім'ю, одна в Едмонтоні, дві в Спірит Ривері, син живе на фармах, фармарує, всі мають дітей.

Ми доживаємо віку в містечку Спірит Ривер, дістаємо пенсію, маємо свій город і все що нам треба.

Sam and Sophia Wlad

Sam and Emile Wlad arrived in the Spirit River area on June 19, 1929, and filed on the S.E. 32-79-6-W6, which at that time was referred to as “Beyond the Creeks”. They spent the first night at Bill Zyha's, as he had been on the homestead from early spring. Alex and George Zyha were also there. At that time John and Matt Bilawchuk, and Nick Kushniruk were settled on homesteads, and the rest of the land was available to the homesteaders. The settlers were coming in fast during the rest of 1929, and by the fall of 1930 most of the land was taken up in the Deep Valley District, as it was called later. To the north and east, in the Yellow Creek and Wonderland Districts there was land still available for several years.

As the settlers were coming in, the first thing organized in the district was a place to worship — a church with a place for a cemetery. In the winter of 1929-30 the church was built by the few pioneers in the district at the time, and the Ksituan School was also built. It was the first in the district to the west, and served not only as a school, but also for all activities in the community and beyond, until such time as the other districts were formed. The school house mentioned, was used for meetings, concerts, and dances, until the time the Slawna Hall was built in 1946. The hall opened that spring for recreational purposes as well as other activities of the communities of Deep Valley and Yellow Creek Districts. Concerts, plays, shows, and picnics of the whole districts combined, were held there. A Farmers' Union picnic was an annual event, until finally the settlers thinned out in the late '60's and the hall did not operate any more. By then the younger folks started to go to more centralized places.

The district of Deep Valley had a hard time to form a school, as the area was badly cut up by the creeks, and it was hard to satisfy everybody as to a



First shack built on Emil's homestead.



Ksituan Baseball Gang, 1933.



Threshing time, 1940.

site for the school. Nobody was willing to cross the creek to get to the school. Finally, through the efforts of Sam Wlad, Bill Zyha, and Adam Juzwishin, the school was built, and opened in the fall of 1946. It was named Deep Valley School, and served its purpose until 1956 when the Spirit River School Division centralized all the schools in the districts, to Blueberry Creek School.

A new Orthodox Church was built in 1955-56, on the same site as the original one, and the old church was moved to a new place on the same grounds. There are only a few of the original pioneers left at this time of writing, but the church still serves the younger generation.

Of most concern to settlers in the districts mentioned, were the roads. They were poor at first, and did not improve much until such time as the schools were centralized. Then we had to have a better network of roads for the school buses to travel on. The roads did improve then, with higher grades and gravel, and they had to be snow plowed in winter.

Sam Wlad married Sophia Badiuk in November 1938, and lived on the farm homestead until retirement. In the spring of 1978 they moved to Grande Prairie, but still come to the farm occasionally. They had three children Eddie, Lillian and Margaret, who attended Deep Valley School, then Blueberry Creek School, and Spirit River High School; then after graduation went to St. Joseph's College in Grande Prairie.

Eddie Wlad married Doris Buchinski in October, 1962 and lives in Grande Prairie. At present he farms the land he bought from his father-in-law, George Buchinski. They had two children, Russell and Dianna.

Lillian married John Zurock in March 1965 and they live in Spirit River. They farm Sam Wlad's land as well as their own, and also John's mother's land. They have two children Randy and Terry. Margaret married Aalt Someren in June 1974 and lives in Leduc, Alberta. They have two children, Shauna and Trevor. Aalt Someron is the co-owner of Suburban Stationery and Printing in Leduc, Alta.



Aerial View of Sam Wlad's farm.

Silver Valley

W. J. and Doris Baxter

In 1974 W. J. Baxter and family moved to the Silver Valley area. His two sons, Rory and Trever, started school in grades four and two respectively. The Agricultural Society was well under way and the Recplex was just being started at this time. They found the community friendly and easy to get along with.

It was in 1975 that Doris Baxter realized the need for a 4-H movement in the district, and the first club was formed. The country life has been a big change from the hustle and bustle of city life. They are now in the process of building a log house, and they are sure to enjoy many more years in Silver Valley.

Harold and Betty Brown

The Browns moved to the Silver Valley area in 1977 in order to enable Howard to farm with his son, H. Dalmain Brown, who had moved here in 1976. Together father and son bought some of the land belonging to the National Grain Co.; they then entered into a partnership and began to work together as a joint operation.

Howard was born in Starbuck, Man. From there he moved to a homestead community northeast of Nipawin, Sask. When the land was to be flooded out by the Squaw Rapids Dam in 1962, he moved to Tisdale, Sask. There he continued to farm for 14 years. Harold made several trips to the Peace country between the years of '74-'76 in order to locate land that could be jointly agreed upon by both himself and son. In 1975 he came to the Valley and made arrangements for the National Grain Co. farm. On this trip he met some of the people who were very helpful.

His son then accepted a position with the Spirit River S.D. at the Savanna School and moved into the area. Howard followed that spring.

The only building that was on the land was an old fescue shed, which, due to the passage of time, had been rendered to a state of dilapidation. It housed a wild tomcat and a delegation of mice. Consequently the Browns bought a mobile home.

It was decided upon, with the help of his grandson and members of the Peter Wiebe family, to enter into a joint project to log some timber so that the lack of lumber would no longer inhibit the construction of improved buildings.

Each area is different and responds differently. Figuring out what makes a country tick is exasperating and occasionally marred by failure. During the first three years in the Valley, the crops have not responded well. But next year, Harold hopes the weather will co-operate. Next year is always going to be better.

The Family Heritage

by Debra Brown

In August of 1976, the Brown family, Dalmain, Joan, Debra, Howard, and Gillian, moved into the homestead country of Silver Valley, with an old grain truck groaning under its heavy burden, a Chev. half-ton with a doghouse clinging precariously to the back, and a car packed with miscellaneous nonconformables.

For the past eighteen months, we had resided in Lloydminster, Alberta, where Dal was the quality control manager for United Oilseed Products, but basically, we considered our home to be in the Nipawin-Tisdale area of Saskatchewan. We had planned to settle down there, but the Squaw Rapids Dam flooded our land and sent us on a search for other land. This finally ended in the purchase of the west half of 11-82-11-W.6 and the west half of 12-82-11-W.6 from National Grain in 1976.

The odd procession must have evoked some laughter as we wended our way to one of the trailer teacherages which was to be our home for the following two years. Dal taught grade four for one year, and grade seven for two years, but teaching was not his reason for coming to this region — it was ultimately, to farm, so at the close of the 1978-79 school year, he quit teaching to become a full-time farmer.

Dal's father, Howard R. Brown, and his wife Betty moved onto their land, adjacent to ours, in

March of 1977. Together, Howard and Dal worked at getting the land into shape for seeding. Rocks were abundant and the younger members discovered what "toiling by the sweat of one's brow" meant, after plush city life. The work load was broadened when, in the winter of 1977, we rented the west half of 18-82-10-W.6. Ten years or more of fescue sod, willow growth, and sedimentary particles greeted the four-bottom plough and the G-6 tractor when summer arrived, but one hundred and forty acres were cleared, burned and worked.

It was rumored that Silver Valley was a dry area. However, the first year of our arrival lent a certain degree of doubt to such "hearsay", when "monsoon" rains drowned a good percentage of the crop. In fact, the suggestion to plant rice did not sound altogether ridiculous. The second year's crop, however, produced a satisfactory harvest.

In that same summer of 1978, our family decided it had spent long enough in the confines of a trailer, and rented Barbara Dyck's house, where we resided for one year. It had long been Dal and Joan's anticipation to build a permanent domicile on their own land, and it was during this year that plans were painstakingly drawn up.

In the summer of 1979, construction began. The shell went up quickly, but with interminable delays, the house was transformed slowly thereafter, into liveable quarters. In the meantime, we transported our earthly possessions to a leaky granary and resigned ourselves to dwelling in a holiday camper for a few weeks.

Joan began work as the new Resource Room teacher in the fall of 1979 and Dal continued his work of building the "Brown Empire". Since then, there has appeared to be no end to the tasks which must be completed. However, this becomes secondary to the knowledge that we have finally settled down to a life that we have sought so diligently to attain.

Bryson Burrows

We originally came from England about two generations ago, my mother was Pennsylvannia Dutch, and English. I applied for a homestead in the Silver Valley area in August 1962, contacted Bob McKee to cut and pile as soon as my application was accepted, this was received early in '63. Those days you could acquire land under a Homestead Sale with **no** residential qualifications which suited me. I was also influenced by my employer, Mark Dubord, who was acquainted with members of Silver Slope Co-op. There were three other friends who also applied.

Poor roads, no phones or electricity and in my case wet land, was our greatest difficulty in trying to get the fields ready for seed, which was usually late

June or early July, and that was too late for cereal crops. The Dist. Ag., Mr. Gardner, was very helpful and helped me with my first crop of Creeping Red Fescue. Drainage has been my greatest problem and am still working on it.

In 1966 we held a public meeting to form a cattle co-op, each member to acquire 10 head, there were 5 members, and the hardships can probably be best described by Tex Fimrite. It was agreed each member was responsible for acquiring feed for the winter — Tex Fimrite's farm was chosen as the headquarters, so Grover Brotherston and myself had to haul feed 16 miles by tractor and haywagon. The bales were wet and heavy and we had 2 miles of travel which was practically impossible. This was a real problem 'cause we needed to have the feed at Tex's before we closed down our operations for the winter. It was a near disaster; seemed as though we wouldn't be able to get the feed to the cattle. Our last load was 2 wagons pulled by my J. D. 3010 and we were stuck, as was his car. Finally we hooked up Grover's 5020 to my tractor and the car to the wagons. At the first cross-road we met Frank Spurgeon with a client for Geo. Gillands farm and when the clients saw us, he lost interest in farming.

My most pleasant times were the House Warmings and the Community Dances and functions. The people of Fourth Creek and Silver Valley were very good at seeing the new homes "warmed up". The way the moccasin telegraph operated always amazed me.

Our home was built in 1965. In 1966 some of us purchased portable army huts from Wainwright. Byers Trsp. was to bring them up on a weekend. Mark Dubord, and Bill McConnell came up Friday night and attended a box social at Silver Valley. I couldn't come up till Saturday. I was having lunch in Valleyview when I overheard one driver telling the other what fun he had had at Silver Valley, at the box social, and that they looked after him so well at the farm



B. Burrows Family Picture.

(which was our home). Apparently Mark Dubord bought 5 or 6 lunches which caused an uproar, with a few funny incidents thrown in.

The enclosed snapshot shows us going for an inspection trip to the far end of the field with myself, Barbara Ann, Norma, Doug, Norma and Grover Brotherston and Don Philips in that order.

Denis — Tom and Pauline

We arrived in Silver Valley Oct. 1, 1951 with our three children James, age 5, Tommy, age 2 and John 2 months old. We came with a 2 ton truck, all our belongings loaded on it, and pitched a tent by the side of the road in Silver Valley. John and Justina Hudie had come with us, as our homesteads were beside one another. We had come from Taber, and before that, we had all come from Fox Valley, Sask.

We spent the first night in the tent without heat, it was so cold, we all slept with our clothes on, John only 2 months old was wrapped in many blankets, but still he cried a lot. Mrs. Hudie looked after Tommy, as she had no children, but was expecting in January of 52.

Next day, Oct. 2, we found our homestead, and pitched the tent, which was fairly large, then set up a cook stove in it, which kept us all warm and we were able to cook our meals. We lived in this tent for two weeks, while the men built a shack, which had no windows; we couldn't afford to buy any. Our coal-oil lamp burned day and night for light. It got very cold by the end of October and we had about a foot of snow.

Pauline's brothers, George and John arrived from Fox Valley. George had a homestead next to Denis's.

That winter, Tom, George and John Wandler, and John Hudic spent their time cutting logs for Jack Bird in Happy Valley. The first of November, we packed most of our belongings and drove to Happy Valley; the men had built two shacks, one for us and one for Hudics. Mrs. Hudic and I sat in the truck all day with the children till the shacks were finished. It was cold but the truck was kept running. About 10 p.m. the men set up a stove and we moved in. We stayed all winter. The next spring we all went back to the homesteads.

George and John Wandler went back to Sask. for a few months, John stayed there. George married and they came up to live that spring.

In 1952 we dropped our first homestead and moved 10 miles north to the Lassiter project. The land was cleared for veterans. Tom worked for Lassiter, breaking our land. We lived in a small cabin close to the Lassiter camp.

One night while Tom was working the late shift, I was sitting by the table reading, our 3 boys were in bed I heard a noise outside somebody was trying to open the door. I was very frightened. We had a tame deer at that time which never left the shack. I had a pail sitting outside beside the door, I heard that tip over, so thinking it was the deer, I opened the door and looked a big black bear in the face. I screamed. I was frozen by the door, she or he turned and ran, I think it was as scared as I was. I was so relieved, I was sure it had come to kill me and the children. I never saw the bear again.

There were a lot of bears, so we had to be careful not to let the boys wander away into the trees. John, who was 2 years old, ran into the trees to hide one



Pauline, Tommy and bear.



Pauline and boys.



Denis Group.

day. I called him but he wouldn't answer me. He thought it was a game. Finally I said, "John come out, I have candies", he said, "I'm coming".

When James was 7 he took Grade 1 by correspondence and passed to Grade 2. There was no school yet so that fall he went into Spirit River and stayed at the Dorm. He was the first boy to stay there. It was run by the Sister's of St. Marie's Separate School. By the time Tommy started school, we had moved to Spirit River and bought 22 acres south of town. We did the farming in the Valley from there.

George and Marie moved back to Saskatchewan in '57, John and Justina Hudic moved to B.C. the first year they came. Edwin was born to us in '55, then Aquina and Mary. We sold our homestead to Victor Viola and are presently farming north of Spirit River. We built our first house in 1976, in Spirit River, where we are still living.

Aron and Jessie Derksen by Denise (granddaughter)

April 1953 saw the arrival of some homesteaders, my grandparents included, to an area of bush trails and trees which they called Silver Valley. Just one month before, a few men had gone to look at the area and, taking back a good report, encouraged others to come and homestead on some already broken land. The Government had decided to open up new land for the homesteaders, after the 2nd World War, so a man by the name of Lassiter had the contract to open up this area — there were thousands of acres cleared and broken and the settlers started coming in. The first family to take up residence was



Home of Squared Timbers.

in 1951 when Tommy Denis, Georg Wandler, Tom's brother-in-law, and the Bob Schallhorns arrived. Unfortunately the good report these men brought back was mainly due to the fact that the snow which had not yet melted covered the roots and rocks which should have been removed by the clearing contractors. Yet despite all this my grandparents and their son (19) Gordon, and 11 yr. old Sharon, departed for the Valley from Spirit River one April day.

As it turned out, it was a long trip. They left Spirit River with two large trucks, a trailer, and a pickup. They had driven only 5 miles when the hitch on the trailer broke and they had to go back and get it fixed. After that was repaired, they tried once more. Seven miles up the Silver Valley road (which was only built the fall before) the homesteaders came to their first mud hole. An axle broke on one of the trucks and the owner had to buy a new one, which he did for \$17.95. It has been called the "Eighteen Dollar Hole" ever since. They camped on the road that night and the next day managed to get the pickup out of the mud and down the road six miles farther. There they came to another mud hole and got stuck again. So two of the men took the tractor and went to the Lassiter camp where the foreman came to the rescue with a "Cat", hauling everything into their camp. They were all welcomed by a supper prepared by the camp cook.



Snowfall Sept. 1/57.

Also present at the camp was a young man eagerly awaiting the arrival of a girl whom he had heard was coming, only to find that she was 11 yrs. old. Needless to say, he was greatly disappointed. They made their temporary home in one of the bunkhouses at the camp, while looking for a place to build their own house. They found just such a place, got some lumber from Bonanza and laid a few logs as a foundation, then it proceeded to rain as they they had never seen it before, and when they returned the timbers were all floating. So they found a higher place and built a 14x24 foot shack in which the family lived.

The first year proved to be a difficult one, there were plenty of roots and rocks to clear. The roads were very poor and during rain storms they had to be towed with nothing less than a D-8. If it hadn't been for the Fox brothers, who owned a Cat, they would never have been able to get their seed and gas to the farm. It took a great deal of community spirit to get a crop in that first year and the crops that did get seeded were very poor as were the gardens. All but a few families went to work for the Fox Bros. at Slave Lake that fall.

By next spring the roads had not improved very much, but everyone was hopeful. The crops were seeded again and more legumes were added, eventually improving the soil, and also the crops. More people started coming in and conditions improved greatly. The future was beginning to look a great deal brighter.

Certainly the most incredible things about the Valley at this time included the weather, the mud, the mosquitoes, and the terrible roads, but there was the fantastic determination of the homesteaders to make a go of it in spite of everything. My mother, who was Helen Dyck, remembers a time when she and her sisters walked in knee-deep water digging up potatoes from a neighbor's garden. When my parents were courting, my father rode his horse 7 miles across impossible roads to see my mother. Once when riding back through the mud, his horse threw him and proceeded to go home alone. My grandparents were a little concerned when the horse came in without their son and I imagine my father was also concerned as he trudged through three feet of water and mud in his good clothes, with the mosquitoes swarming around. Well that was true devotion, and my parents were married October 1st, 1957. As it turned out, that was the only day during harvest season that the sun shone.

Things were not always easy; without refrigeration, freshly killed meat had to be distributed quickly, so it could be canned. If a person drove to town he would get groceries and other supplies and run er-



Farewell for student minister (Ron Foubister), 1961.

rands for most of the neighborhood, as such trips were few and far between.

Without a hall, gatherings such as church, pot-luck suppers and community meetings were held in my grandparents' home. But soon a good usable road was built, a new hall was constructed by volunteers, a school was started and everyone got together to make a ball diamond. More people moved in, electricity replaced the wind-chargers about '65. By this time my parents had 3 children, Melvin, age 7, brother Ken age 5, and myself a few months old.

Since then my grandparents, Aron and Jessie have moved into Spirit River. Their daughter Sharon



Wedding Group — Harry and Sharon.

is married and living in Sicamous, B.C., with her husband Harry Dyck and four children. Not only the people but the Valley itself has changed a great deal from those early days. Television and telephones have changed the way of life of the homesteaders. Oh, there's still mud and mosquitoes, and some roots and rocks to be picked, but not as plentiful as they were. One thing is sure, we haven't lost the community spirit that cleared the land, built up our community, and I salute you homesteaders, for your determination and strength have laid the foundation for generations to come.

Laurie Drever by Heather

As a boy, Laurie Drever wondered what it would be like to live on a farm. How much more could life change? Would living on the farm be a greater experience towards excitement than the city life? Well, one thing, he wouldn't have to worry about getting lost in a crowd or being pinned down by traffic. He was looking for a country future. Later when he married Martha Dyck (a country gal) on September 25, 1959, he knew he was headed down the right lane towards freedom.

This dream was gradually becoming a reality. Since his wife's parents lived in Silver Valley, he thought he'd go and look the area over. He did, and was quite impressed with it. The scenery was beautiful especially the leafy green coulees and the great canyon. Among these there was the wild life — so fascinating to watch. This can't be found in the city!

In 1965 he was no longer dreaming. He and his wife had found a half section of land on N. ½-9-82-11-6 which no one had claimed yet, and he applied for it. On January 1, 1967 he built a 12' x 18' house (shack) on his Mother and Father-in-law's homestead.

1969 passed with Martha and the kids, Ian, Heather, Bobby, and Shelly staying in the Silver

Valley area for the summer and fall while a cat cleared the land. Dad only came for short visits, since he was working on an oil well. We moved up for good in 1970 (the year our younger brother James was born), on Mom and Dad's Wedding Anniversary. Later that fall, on October 23rd, the family left a space for an additional boy, William Dwayne, which summed the boys' score of four and left the girls with two.

Out of all the places the Drevs have been, they've been in Silver Valley now for ten years and have had some really good times.

Shindouski (Frank Dyck) by Deean Dyck

In a little log house, nestled in the poplars on Sec. 31-51-10-W.2 Saskatchewan, the dawn crept through the windows announcing the morning of May 5th, 1938. In the very air of this cool spring morning was a feeling of miraculous wonder because in the quiet stillness, John and Aganetha Dyck, in loving harmony, awaited the birth of their ninth child. The stillness gave way to the beautiful song of the morning birds — the moment approached, and joyful excitement filled the home. In an atmosphere of warmth and love, Frank Dyck entered the world. As second surviving son, the new babe was bestowed with the honor of his mother's father's Christian name. It was a good name — it was a great name — it was a name to wear proudly.

He spent his childhood days on the little homestead in Mennonite Farm Country in Northern Saskatchewan. His strong will and determination were already apparent, as when he was only five years of age he walked two miles to the neighbor's for a new wagon handle.

Suddenly, at the age of eight, the door of new horizons was opened. The family sold out, packed up, and moved through Saskatchewan to Southern Alberta.

Growing up in the post depression years provided a great school of character for a young boy. As some lessons proved hard, others proved to be downright comical if not tasty. Never having seen fruit before, while riding in the back of the wagon, Frank discovered some discarded orange peels along a country road. Attracted by the brilliant color, he jumped from the wagon, grabbed the peelings, caught the wagon, and shared his prize with his siblings. Later that year at Christmas, Frank discovered what was wrapped in orange peelings, for on his breakfast plate he discovered his first orange.

Another Christmas brought the joys of receiving his first very own jackknife, a prize indeed. Bitter disappointment soon followed, as he accidentally



The Laurie Drevs.

lost it in a rat hole in the floor, never to be found again.

His love of machines and his mechanical ability began to bloom. At age fourteen, his junkyard garden produced a hotrod Model A. He was quite a dashing sight as he motored up and down the irrigation canal banks.

In the fall of his eighth grade, he gave up the academic world for the life of a cowboy. He landed a great job with regular hours — dawn to dusk — and fantastic wages — a dollar a day including a bottle of beer with supper and his room. Of course, being a considerate son, he sent his dollar a day home.

One incident that made cowboying a very interesting occupation was fencing a coulee one day. Frank was stretching wire; his companion stapling, when his companion thought he saw a rattler. In his fright, he jumped straight up and clung on to Frank's back screaming . . . Two years of being a cowboy was enough. At age sixteen, he, like all boys, got his driver's license. Immediately following, he bought his first truck, an old three-ton grain truck.

When he was seventeen, his family packed up and moved north to Silver Valley. After arriving at the Valley, he went out to work on various different jobs, roughneck on an oil rig, pipeliner, catskinner, logskidder, firefighter, and farm hand.

Being provided with 'on the job' training, he became a competent jack-of-all-trades. In 1959, he took out his homestead, W. ½ 19-82-10-W6 in Silver Valley.

He tried his hand at running his own land-clearing outfit for the farmers of the area, of which a large percentage were Ukrainian. It was the Ukrainian farmers who gave this happy-go-lucky, fun loving catskinner his nickname Shindouski.

He had numerous hair-raising adventures, but gave up land clearing in favor of road building. Returning from work one night during a blizzard, Frank's Volkswagon bug left the road, and in the middle of a small lake, fell through the ice. The next morning he returned to the Volkswagon, chopped it out, and thawed it out by burning the hubcaps filled with gas. In the end it looked like a little black cube of charcoal motoring along.

On another occasion, Shindouski was inspecting a granary roof for a Wonderland farmer when he fell off, knocking himself out. Morning found a very cold, surprised, and disoriented Shindouski on a lumber pile between two granaries — not the best place to sleep.

One of the social highlights of the homesteaders was 'housewarmings'. At one housewarming, when the festivities were in full swing, someone shouted "Fire". Frank spent the rest of the early morning

fighting fire to prevent the burning down of the house they were warming . . . Another housewarming brought out the local moonshine. The next day Frank and some of his associates awoke to find the fire water had robbed them of their power of speech. A quiet time was had by all for approximately a week.

The notorious Shindouski was beginning to find life a little too exciting. Solution — he decided to give up bachelorhood and get married. After extensive searching, he brought home his bride, Frances.

After a short and hungry attempt at making his first million land-clearing, Frank moved his family to the Yukon in 1968. Here he worked on the famous Klondike and Dempster Highways and tried his hand at silver mining.

In 1972, Frank sold his land holdings in the Yukon and moved his family back to the old homestead in Silver Valley. His life now formed a well known pattern of working out during the winters and farming during the summers. On the farm he tried his hand at grain farming, raising cattle, mixed farming, and settled on honey producing.

Wherever Frank goes, he is still greeted with "Hello, Shindouski!" and the good times continue on. Friends come from far and near to visit and reminisce at the old home place.

One particularly fond memory is of the first spring in Silver Valley, when Frank and his friends decided the cure for cabin fever was a walk in the mud to Spirit River, 52 miles away. Many versions of this story can still be enjoyed every springtime. Fifty-two miles of stories can be very interesting.

George Dyck

George Edwin Dyck was born on July 21st, 1941 in Clarkboro, Saskatchewan. He was one of a family of nine, and the others were, Alfred, William, Peter, Helen, John, Mary, Abraham, and Fred. His parents are John L. and Sarah Dyck. This large family lived in various locations for the first seven years of George's life.

They all moved to Lymburn, Alberta in 1948, then to Spirit River in 1954, and in May 1955 William and George moved into Silver Valley until the summer, when the others joined them. There they lived in an unsettled state for quite a number of years.

They were also in and out of Wembley for two years. After that they went back to Lymburn for another year, and finally moved back to Silver Valley and stayed.

George worked for Rawlin's Construction Ltd. more or less constantly, with a few pauses for breaking land, etc., from 1960 to 1972. Since then he has been trying to construct a farm, while living on it all the time.

The John H. Dyck Family

by Denise Derksen

An account of the first years in Silver Valley as seen by Bertha Dyck (8 years of age at the time she came).

From Barnwell, the Dyck family came to this area, leaving daughter Helen and three other married daughters, Kay, Anne and Liz in Lethbridge. On November 3, 1955, John and Aganetha Dyck, John Jr., Mary, Frank, Susie, Benjamin, Peter, Bertha, and Alma drove into Silver Valley. Detained by a snowstorm three days earlier, they had stayed at Ben and Amanda Loewen's, along the 49 Highway. The unknown country ahead of her caused Mother to say with the psalmist David; "What I have feared has come upon me."

Plowing through fresh snow on the Silver Valley Road, it was an exciting, fearful time. Arriving at their new home, they noticed the desolate countryside, many charred stumps, deadfalls, and new growth only 6 feet tall. The younger children stayed in the car, hoping they would leave immediately. As it happened, the John H. Dyck family didn't leave at all, much less in '55! Indeed, November 3, 1980 marks the 25th anniversary of their arrival in the Silver Valley area.

As the winter progressed, Frank and John Jr., often went hunting, shooting several moose and deer to supplement their winter supply of food (mainly 300 pounds of beans). The house was a one-room shell, partitioned with curtains, and kept warm with both a heater and a wood cookstove in the bitterly cold weather.

There were only two neighbours — the Jake Dyck family and the Dries Van Norels, and all roads were snowed in for the whole winter except the one time a seismic cat. got lost and cleared the road. On December 23, 1955, the men decided to drive into Spirit River, 50 miles away. Taking the big Ford ton truck, they would ram their way through heavily drifted places in the road. Once in town they bought

groceries and Christmas presents and got the mail. On Christmas day the truck wouldn't start, so on the 26th they eventually left and got to the John Dyck homestead that night. Meanwhile, everyone had been waiting for the sound of the old Ford in the bitter cold air. At night they watched for headlights in the distance. They could be seen as far away as Van Norel's homestead, four miles distant. When they did arrive at Jake Dyck's what shouting and celebrating, as children opened gifts, and adults recounted their trip to town.

The first year will always be remembered as the



Cutting firewood.

most isolated yet exciting year, but it was only the beginning. In 1956, 10 acres was seeded to crop, and 10 acres plowed. Benny especially enjoyed breaking up the new land with the New John Deer D. The terrain was so rough that the tractor looked as tho' it might tip on its side. As it continued to rain up to seven days at a stretch, and mosquitoes increased in number, the Dyck family was introduced to the worst that Silver Valley could offer. However, now that they were settled in their new surroundings, there was always land to clear, a family to feed and jobs to be done, and always there were neighbours ready to pitch in if help was needed.

But life was more than work. Many of the Dyck children can remember how they used to provide their own entertainment. Hockey, baseball, horseback riding (whenever a horse could be borrowed), and the occasional, practically endless monopoly game played at the Jake Dyck house, a quarter of a mile away. They can also recall how their father used to build their homemade skis: an endless source of pleasure as well as a great means of transportation.



First Home.

And speaking of transportation, the Ford ton truck that they purchased for \$500 just prior to their arrival in Silver Valley was to take them to Lethbridge and back seven times without one major repair ever being necessary.

As the years went by, Silver Valley changed a great deal from the desolate country that first greeted the homesteaders. Many of John and Aganetha's sons and daughters left home and were married. Then the grandchildren started coming, and Mr. and Mrs. Dyck love every one of them.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1974, because of the upcoming occasion of John and Aganetha Dyck's 50th wedding anniversary, a celebration was held in the local hall, and over fifty family members turned out to visit, reminisce, and appear in a rather crowded looking family picture. Since then many more individuals have joined the ranks as in-laws, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren.

At the time of the arrival of the Dyck family in this area, they were one of the only three families here. Now there are about ten more families in Silver Valley as a result of that first trip to the new homestead. Certainly this family has enriched the area, not only numerically, but in their kindness and hospitality.



50th Anniversary.

Now another special occasion is on its way. The 25th anniversary of the arrival of the Dyck family in Silver Valley is November 3, 1980. It will be a time to recount past experiences and to share the joys of the present. Twenty-five years is a long time by any standard, but in the words of John H. Dyck himself "If I could do it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

Fimrite: Tex, Karen, Jason, Jameson Troy

After having served three years in the Royal Canadian Navy, Tex Fimrite filed on the west half of 26-81-9 in 1963. A few years later he filed again, this time on the west half of 23-81-9. The first house, having the dimensions of 12 feet by 16 feet, was built beside Myrtle Allen's dugout. She assisted in construction and gave sound technical advice: Build the windows high so they'll be out of the bear's reach.

In 1966 he married Karen Gunderson of La Glace, and nine days after the wedding she returned to the University of Alberta in Edmonton to complete her Bachelor of Education degree. During this time, Tex operated Fimrite Contracting Ltd. in the High Level — Zama area. During the 1967-68 school term, Karen taught at the High Level Public School while Tex continued his slashing and clearing opera-



Fimrite first home, 1968.



Jason and Troy Fimrite.

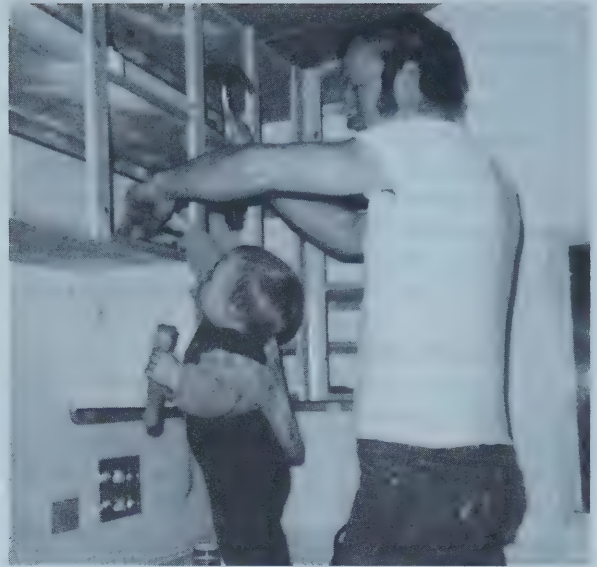
tion. During July and August, they toured South and Central America. In the fall of 1968, Karen began teaching at the Savanna School and Tex turned to farming while driving a school bus on the side.

The cattle business seemed quite promising so a cattle company was formed by Jack Bird, Grover Brotherson, Bryson Burrows, Gus Roose and Tex. Each purchased ten heifers. Cattle prices were unstable so in a few years some of the members sold out. Anyway, that was the start of Tex's present farming interests. The Herefords were crossed with Angus and Charolais and the offspring were crossed with Charolais. He is presently a lifetime member of the Canadian Charolais Association.

Sufficient land to be used for grazing was a problem and Jack Bird had the solution. "Jack told me one day of his vision of a grazing reserve in Township 80. He convinced me of the concept and told me that I had to see that it was developed. It has taken about ten years, countless meetings, surveys, and a brief to the Honorable Mr. Schmidt. Cattle will be going onto this grazing reserve this spring of 1981 and I wish Jack was here to see it."

Two other events are notable: Jason was born on August 3, 1970, and Jameson Troy followed on August 12, 1974.

Being a first generation on a new land in a new and unsettled area is a privilege granted to few. So much has been received in satisfaction that can't be measured in any other manner. Being present at the conception of a dream such as the building of the Savanna Rec-Plex, going through the battles and struggles, convincing people it could be done and convincing government agencies it could be done, having a great group of community people to work



Jason helping dad.

with, has been and will be a treasured experience. It's part of our history now, but it's also a part of our future.

David W. Friesen Family

David was born in Mackrock, Man. in 1924, he first bought land in Silver Valley in 1966. He broke his own land with a cat and tractor. The majority of the Valley was still bush, his first two years of farming seemed in vain; the falls were wet, which made harvesting difficult, also the roots made swathing costly. These two years were known as the pioneering years for David.

For the unbroken land he paid \$6400 for a ½ sec. He lived in Dawson Creek and commuted back and forth. He bought a condemned house in Dawson for \$1.00 which he moved to the Valley. In '73 he bought 640 more acres for \$20,000, also built a house for his family and moved out to the farm.

In 1948, David married Frances Yakubowski, and from '49 to '68 they had nine children: Gerald, Luella, Karen, Alvin, Robert, Barton, Blair, Tammy and Andrew. When the Friesens moved to the Valley his family had declined to five, their eldest son Gerald had married and was living in Pennsylvania, Luella married and was living in Winnipeg, Man., as was Karen. Alvin was attending school in Pennsylvania (Bryn Athen)

When David moved to the Valley, his intentions were to go into cattle. In the years of '73 and '74 he bought 25 head, today it has increased to 40, along with two horses. David comments that it is not everyone who has the chance to experience pioneering.

Times have changed a great deal in Silver Valley,

we now have a General Store, a large recplex, the school has been enlarged, and has a staff of 14 personnel. This makes the winters a little shorter and more enjoyable.

submitted by Tammy Friesen

Life and Times of Dan Friesen and Family

Daniel Friesen, better known as Dan or Danny, was born on December 28, 1928, in Boggy Creek, Manitoba. Dan was the seventh child of eleven children born to David and Annie Friesen all of which were born in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Dan left home at the age of 17 to make his fortune in northern Ontario. Later, at the age of 19, he moved to Flin Flon, Manitoba, to work in the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Mines. He stuck that out for one year. Alberta was where Dan spent the next 4 years, of his life in the trucking business working for Mannix Construction; he then moved on to Dawson Creek, B.C.

At the age of 24 Dan decided to marry. He met his wife, Carol Swanson, she was working in the St. Joseph's Hospital as a practical nurse. Carol was an only child born to Lenard and Joy Swanson. Daniel, of an old Dutch origin as well as Mennonite background and Carol, of Swedish, Scottish descent were joined in holy wedlock in 1953. They started their marriage in Dawson Creek. The first years they were travelling and moving from Dawson Creek to Watson Lake to White Horse and as far back as Haynes, Alaska. Their first child, Darlene, was born in 1953. Debbie followed in 1955, Gary, in 1958, Danelle in 1962 and last but not least Grant in 1969. Dan and Carol always seemed to make it back to Dawson Creek to have their children.

In 1956 Dan and his brother Cornelius went into the trucking business for themselves and called it C&D Trucking; they only had two trucks and two flat beds which were used to haul oil to the rig fields. Later in 1963 they took in their three older brothers and formed Friesen's Trucking Limited. Each brother took turns driving and managing the business. Dan remained in the business 4 years then in 1967 he and his brother Cornelius bought into cranes and farms. They started a new business called Friesen's Crane Service.

Later, Dan took over the farms and suitcase farmed from Dawson Creek to Silver Valley for six years. The first homestead was known as Tommy Cumming's land which was later sold to Don Phillips. Suitcase farming was quite trying at times — packing, unpacking, hauling kids back and forth every weekend. The family soon learned to appreciate the lazy days spent relaxing after the work was done. The land still not broken had to be broke,

cleaned up and smoothed out; root and rock picking was the most important and the most tiresome of all the work done. Always after work there were a bunch of dirty kids to be cleaned. Yet, under the circumstances it's hard to forget all the fun times the family shared. Dan bought two more farms and decided it was time to make the move; suitcase farming was no longer going to be a hobby. One of the farms was Bill Reay's half and the other half was owned by Pete Verchoor; they finally settled on his brother's homestead.

Dan now owns two sections in Silver Valley and 70 head of cattle; the farm is noticeably land marked with an old crane from Friesen's Crane Service.

Dan, Carol, Gary, Danelle and Grant have been living on the farm for six years now, and like the community of Silver Valley. Gary also owns two farms in Silver Valley and will probably settle down in the area. Twenty-six years of marriage and five grandchildren later, Dan and his family remain a happy one. The grandchildren summed this all up nicely by giving their papa a T-shirt for his birthday that said, "Crime doesn't pay . . . neither does farming." Silver Valley will probably be their home for quite awhile yet.

Those Were the Good Ol' Days

In the year 1960, our father, Edward Friesen, began to homestead a farm covered in bush in Silver Valley, Alberta. The land had to be broke and piled, although after this enormous task the land still was not ready to be put into crop. It was water logged; clover would not even grow. I often remember Dad telling us about the little trails through the bush that led to our farm. In those earlier years the only way from Dawson Creek to our farm was through Blueberry Mountain; many wasted miles were spent on that route.

In 1965 Edward Friesen and his wife Emily moved to Silver Valley to live, along with six of their children: Victor, Patricia, Randy, Donna, Cindy, and Sandra. Their other three children: Shirley, Edell, and Joan were going on to further education in Bryn Athen, Pennsylvania. In this year my father opened up Silver Valley General Store and Post Office; up until this time Silver Valley was not on the map. The addition of the store and post office put Silver Valley on the map.

Four of their children were going to school in Silver Valley at that time. Three years later their youngest children, Cindy and Sandra, began their first day of school in Savanna. The building was small; it had four rooms and one portable beside the main centre. The teachers at that time were: Mr.

Banerjee, Mrs. Fimrite, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Sinclair, Miss Minue, now known as Mrs. Fjeseth, (who was our first grade teacher).

During the winter of 1970 Edward Friesen and family moved back to Dawson Creek, British Columbia, so that Randy and Donna could go to high school, as there was no high school in Silver Valley. Education was a very high factor in our parents' life — for them and for their children. As my mother said: "Education comes before most everything else." So, our father became what is known as a suitcase farmer, travelling from Dawson Creek to Silver Valley to farm the land. Then in 1978 once again they moved to Silver Valley to make a permanent home for a while more. The year is now 1980 and we are still here. After the hardships of farming, clearing the land, picking rocks and roots, the land is now becoming more productive.

Numerous changes have occurred in Silver Valley during the past two decades. For one example, the wildlife population has decreased rapidly. We remember seeing one moose or more a week at least, and that also applied to the bears, coyotes, wolves, etcetera. Now one rarely ever sees any wildlife about. And this is what bothers us the most about the way Silver Valley has changed.

Cindy and Sandra Friesen

Earl Frostad **by Lisa Frostad**

In 1950, Earl Frostad filed on land in the Peace River area when word was let out that this would be opened up for homesteading.

Ralph Frank, a neighbor, took two saddle horses in his one-ton truck. Earl's brother Bert took his truck with bedding, feed for the horses, and food supplies. They drove in north of the Blueberry store and camped at the Josephine Creek. Leaving the vehicles there, they rode horseback around the Fourth Creek district for the first day. On the second day of their adventure, they rode on west to scrutinize the country.

After a time, upon their return, Earl filed for the land E½ 22-81 and received it months late.

A year later, Earl took the Ford tractor, a rubber-tired wagon, and lumber enough to build a granary 10 x 14 feet, to use as living quarters. That summer, he broke 25 acres, and the next year, he seeded a small field of flax, which turned out to be a failure.

In 1955, at the end of March, Earl Frostad, his wife, and four children left their winter abode in Bluesky to live permanently in Silver Valley. Living in the rather small granary, they constructed one a mite larger which measured 14 x 20 feet (in which they lived during the following winter). The next

summer, another piece was added on to their humble home, making it 26 x 30 feet.

His nineteen head of cattle were hauled from Bluesky, and their three horses were ridden over by his son Dwayne Earl. The winters were tedious and trying. The summers were rarely unbearably hot; they were mostly wet and muddy.

Earl's oldest child Dwayne, was working for the government on a survey crew, when the weather was generally forty below, and he was requested to sleep in a tent. All the money he made went towards the farm payments. Because there were no school facilities, Earl's three younger children had to take their schooling by correspondence.

The next winter the family survived on moose meat and vegetables from the garden. A cloud lowered over the new homesteaders when, in 1956, it was discovered that Earl's wife had leukemia. She died in December 1957, and the oldest daughter Yvonne, was required to take over her mother's position when she was only fourteen years old.

The following seasons were hard. With an incomplete family and money so very scarce, life sometimes didn't seem worth living.

After obtaining a Diesel Cat from one of the neighbors, Earl proceeded to clear his land. He cleared enough to plant crops and make some money off them. In this way he survived, but materially he had few possessions.

In 1958 Earl's oldest son Dwayne was united in marriage to Susie Dyck, whose parents were recent homesteaders in the Valley. Earl, now planning to work at his trade as a carpenter, left the farm and sold it to his son.

During the homestead days there were times of anguish and thoughts of surrender, but there were treasured moments that will always remain in his heart.

Dwayne Frostad **by Diane Frostad**

My father, Dwayne Frostad first saw the Silver Valley country in 1951, at the age of twelve. My grandfather Earl Frostad had filed on a homestead a few months previously, and he, along with his dad (my great-grandfather), his brother (Great Uncle Bert), and a neighbor Gordon Albertsworth (a friend from Fairview) came out to look at the land.

It was muddy, as usual, and they got stuck near Bear Creek. Since there was no way to get back out, they left the truck and started to walk. They slept that night in an old log cabin near Bear Creek, and woke up to a breakfast of sausage and whiskey, the only food they had thought to bring along. That day they



Hauling Water.

walked, and walked, and walked, from Bear Creek to Silver Valley (at that time it was called McCallister).

They trudged up to the east half of 22-81-10-W.6, the land Grandpa had filed on. Grandpa sent Dad up a tall tree to survey the land. Because of a forest fire previously, the land was filled with short willows and small trees. Dad could see for miles around. This land was theirs! What a beautiful sight!

After seeing the land they walked back to the truck, and, while the men were pulling out the truck, Dad slept on the only dry piece of land he could find. He had walked close to thirty miles that day. When they finally got home, Gordon Albertsworth's mother asked him how he liked Silver Valley. He didn't say anything, but just got a big pan full of hot water and stuck his feet in it. He never did settle out here. Dad's impression of this place was different. He loved it! So what if it was muddy and wet! It was going to be home and that was all that mattered. Born in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, and having lived in ten different places since he was born, Dad longed for a permanent place to call home.



Threshing.

Dad's family moved here permanently in 1955 — two adults and four children (Dad, Yvonne, Gary and Betty). They had to live in a tiny 10ft.x14ft. shack built on a previous visit. They had brought sixteen cattle which they just turned loose to roam on the range. Dad brought their three horses over on an ice bridge on the Peace River.

There was no school out here, and anyhow Dad and school didn't seem to get along too well. He had quit school at the age of fifteen and got his first job that winter. He and others were employed by the government to survey the coulees in this area. They slept in tents during forty below weather. Dad made \$186 per month on a six day week, all of which he gave to his father to supplement the farm income.

Grandma Frostad died in December of 1957. Dad was eighteen and the youngest was only seven. Aunt Yvonne took over the mother role, although she was only fourteen. There had already been quite a few tragedies in the Valley before this occurred.

In those days horses were the status symbol. The boys would brag about whose horse was the fastest or the best looking. They rode their horses like we drive cars. It was more fun, and hay was cheaper than gas.

One night a man who lived on the corner of what is now Ed. Friesen's land, heard a bear lumbering around his house. He was too tired to go outside, so he just determined where the bear was, and shot through the wall. Well, the next morning he found he had shot through his brand new bath tub hanging on the wall.

During the winter, people made a habit of using the Frostad place as a stopover for the mail. Anyone who went into town would pick up a big box of mail



Dwayne Frostad Family.

and bring it down there. One time they even had a bus load of kids stay the night. The bus had got stuck and the kids couldn't get home. They all just chose a place and bedded down.

What is my father's impression of Silver Valley after all of this? "I've worked almost all over Canada, and this is the nicest looking place I've ever seen yet!"

Harry and Ruby Fox

by Donna Fox

Harry Fox came to the homestead country in Silver Valley in 1952 along with his father and several brothers. They had been living in Slave Lake and Edmonton. Fox Brothers, as they were known, ran a sawmill in Slave lake, sawing lumber in the winter and moving to the farm at Silver Valley in the summer. Times were hard, with no roads to this area. They used a Texaco oil trail for the first several years, travelling mostly by tractor from Highway 49.

Harry was married in March 1957 to Ruby Dyck, second oldest daughter of Jake and Helena Dyck, who were, like Fox Brothers, living at the mill in winter, and starting up farming in the summer. Harry and Ruby continued with the other families, moving back and forth trying to get a full-time farm going.

Time went on, and like most people, soon a baby was on the way. Charles was born in July 1959, soon followed by Raymond in September 1960, and the household was now slightly different than before. No more quiet at any time of the day or night. Tim was born in May 1964, and to the other boys' disappointment, he wasn't a girl. Ray's solution to this problem was to take Tim back and trade him in for a girl. This plan, for some strange reason, was vetoed by Harry and Ruby, much to his dissatisfaction.

The moving back and forth stopped in 1964 when it was time for the children to start school. Charles started in 1965 and Ray in 1966, bringing chaos to the grade one and two classes.

The boys were nicely settled into school after about two years when the Beatles and other "long haired" rock groups came into everyone's lives. The boys decided to become hippies, when they spied their mother arming herself with the old fashioned hand hair clippers. Into the trees they fled, coming down only after the thought of the painful hair pulling was overcome by the agony of an empty stomach telling them it was mealtime, and, as a result hair cutting time.

Time went on: Canada celebrated 100 years of confederation, and Harry and Ruby celebrated 10 years of marriage. The Fox Brothers decided it was time to break partnership and farm on their own. Until this time they were all living at the present residence

of Don Fox. Now they each have their own place and are proceeding to live very happily.

1971 came along and a new house was on the agenda. Until now, Harry, Ruby, and the boys had lived in a three room bungalow which had previously been occupied by Harry, his brothers, and his father. Meanwhile the fourth child was on the way. The family moved into their new home in November, and soon after, their fourth son, Martin was born.

Several years passed, with no major happenings taking place, unless Charles' and Ray's interest in girls could be called a major happening. Now the two oldest boys were working, driving cats and logging.

1979 was the first big year as far as marriage went. Charles and I, a newcomer in the area from Calgary, were married on August 3, 1979 at the Silver Valley Community Church, and we are presently living in the area.

Ray is out working mostly on construction and oil exploration crews. Who knows what female lurks in the hearts of men?

Tim seems to be noticing girls more lately, that is if he can be dragged away from his Hot Rod magazines. It probably won't be long till he will be on the list of eligible young men.

Martin is finally happy to have someone to call his sister, just as I am delighted to have him for a little brother. He seems to be growing terribly fast, and it is hard to believe that soon his goldfish will be neglected for some sweet little girl with big shiny eyes.

Harry and Ruby are nicely settled on their three section farm in Silver Valley, working long hours in the summer and hibernating in the winter. In just two short years, the couple will celebrate 25 years of happy marriage.

Who knows what the future will bring, with the world changing so rapidly. If we knew though, it would take all the enjoyment out of our lives, and so far, we seem to have had more than our share.

Richard and Mary Fox

by Kathleen Fox — 1980

Three decades ago there was nothing here at Silver Valley but the whish of trees responding to the wind. Now the once untamed forest yields rich crops and feeds hundreds of livestock. I have lived here all my life: to me this is home — Silver Valley.

My grandfather, Robert James Fox, is the one who is partially responsible for my existence in this part of the country. Grandpa came out to Silver Valley to 'speculate' along with his two older sons, Harry and Don Fox. Silver Valley had small trees then — easy to clear, since a fire had been through several years before.

Since the sawmill in Slave Lake wasn't prosper-

ing, the prospect of settling on a homestead looked good. After looking over the situation they returned to Slave Lake and discussed the prospect with the other boys, then filed for their homesteads on three and a half sections of land.

The summer of 1952 saw the arrival of the Fox brothers, five to be exact, and one very seasoned homesteader, Grandpa. Cats provided the transportation, and an old oil road the route to travel upon.

The first two hundred acres were cleared that summer. The brothers were Harry, Don, Richard, Glenn, and Claude Fox. That year was to be Grandpa's first and last year homesteading out in Silver Valley. No doubt there were more hardships and disappointments in their homesteading than could be expressed by written word. However, one that was the most heartbreaking was the death of their father in April 1953. Did the spirit of homesteading dim without the encouragement of this quiet, strong willed man? It must not have, for all five Fox brothers returned that summer to plant their first crops.

1953 also staged the scene for the first means of entertainment: Baseball. The team included George, Neal, Jake, and Bill Rempel, Gordon Derksen, Glenn, Richard, Don, and Harry Fox. Baseball would in the future see many new team members, a loss of some of the old, but the same exciting team spirit would prevail.

Mud, on such dirt roads, was the travellers' worst enemy, so when a person would decide to go to town, others would also tag along. Sometimes, in really bad conditions, a cat would pull the procession up to the main highway. Going to town was never a one day expedition either. It took a good two days to make the round trip.

Richard Fox married another homesteader's daughter, Mary Dyck. There were five children. Debra Stone (nee Fox) was married to Tim Stone in August 1979. She is now finishing her last year at the U. of A. as a Math. teacher. Janet is also attending the U. of A. taking her training for a forestry technician. I, Kathleen, am in Grade XI at Savanna, and Virginia is in Grade V. Then there is my brother Joshua who is almost two years old.

This is my family and my heritage, engraved in a community called Silver Valley.

Claude Fox

by Kevin Fox

In 1951 Robert Fox and two of his sons, Harry and Don came to Silver Valley to file on land. Their transportation was a team and wagon. After they had filed on their land they returned in 1952 with Claude, Dick, and Glenn, and their transportation this time was a TD9 and a sloop. They made a camp across the



Claude Fox Family.

creek at Blueberry where they stayed for four days. Jim and Marge Hindmarch sold butter and eggs to them.

After leaving Blueberry they made camp at the Savanna School corner, while Dick went back to Spirit River for fuel. They corduroyed on the old oil road near the highway, and were paid \$15 a day for this.

Claude worked for Lassiter, clearing land for the soldiers of World War II. Barney Archer was the foreman.

Claude filed for his land in 1953. The land location is the west half of 5-82-10-W.6. He bought Lassiter's office for \$35 and he broke 100 acres.

In those days the greatest hardships were roads; the only decent roads reached about a mile out of Spirit River. Sometimes it would take three days to make a round trip.

Claude got married in April, 1955, to Evelyn Erickson in Westlock, Alberta. They moved every winter to a mill at Slave Lake. Some people from the district used to work there.

In December of 1956 Linda was born. She was followed by Doug in January of 1958. The following year in March, Wendy was born, then Dale, born in March of 1961. Kevin was born April of 1963, then Alvin in February of 1965.

During the winters of 1963 to 1969 we moved to Prince George. Then we moved to Mackenzie the summer of 1969. From then on we did weekend farming during the summers for six years. We moved back to the farm in 1975 and started raising livestock. We also built a new house.

Linda is now married to Mike Milner and they have 3 children, Tina, Sharon, and Chris. After living in Mackenzie, B.C., they moved to Hope, B.C.

Wendy is married to Burt Friesen. They have one son, born Sept. 29, 1978, called Kent. They live in Mackenzie, B.C. Dale is engaged to Marie Sewel, he also lives in Mackenzie, B.C., plans of getting married in 1980.

In August 1977, Kevin Fox, then 14 years old, was involved in a near tragedy, for which he has been awarded for the saving of two lives, in a near drowning accident.

The first award was the Gold Honor Award, presented by George Brewster, Chief Junior Forest Warden in Oct. 77. As a member of the Junior Forest Wardens, Kevin took part in a survival and rescue course.

His second award was the Royal Canadian Humane Association bronze medal, presented by Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, the Hon Ralph G. Steinauer in Feb. 1979 at a Government House ceremony in Edmonton.

The third award was in March, 1979, The Right Honourable Edward Shreyer, Gov. Gen. of Canada, presented Kevin with the medal of Bravery at a Bravery Investiture Ceremony in the Ballroom of Government House, in Ottawa.

Jim Hale

Jim Hale first came to the area to work on the construction of the original Moonshine Lake dam in September 1959. I guess he was impressed with the area, as the following year he applied for his homestead in Silver Valley. He moved onto his homestead in a sea of mud, the spring of 1964. In those early years, any roads built were done on your own. He hauled culverts from Grande Prairie and built the first trail into his farm.

Everyone grew clover, and the area was beautiful with blossom. Jim decided honey production would be a good business. Bees became his livestock, and he became the first commercial honey producer in the area. Jim and Irene still reside on the original homestead, as do all of their family who continue to operate the bee business.

Leo and Joanne Lefebvre and Family

Leo Paul Lefebvre was born at Loon Lake, Saskatchewan on August 21, 1940. His proud parents, Harry and Antionette lived on a farm in Barthel, which is about 15 miles from Loon Lake. Leo quit school at an early age of 16½, unable to continue his studies because he had to help the rest of his family with the excessive amount of work that had to be done on the farm.

He lived at home until he was 18, then he came to the Peace River District in the spring of 1958, and

found a reasonable paying job working for Loiselle's in Dawson Creek, B.C. hauling freight. He worked there for one year and a half, then decided to start a business of his own where he could be his own boss — yes, farming of course. This had been his dream since he was a small child — to own his own farm.

Leo started homesteading in spring 1960. He bought a small piece of land in Bonanza, Alberta, and broke some land. By the end of the fall there was 20 acres of land almost ready for farming purposes. Then in early spring in 1961, Leo persisted on breaking another chunk of land. This time it was 80 acres which he had done by the fall of '61.

Spring 1962 came around quicker than ever and Leo had 100 acres ready for seeding. He got his crop seeded quite early which was very pleasing to him. Harvest time came creeping around the corner and he was fortunate enough to get his first crop off before snow flew. Now he would have time to think about other responsibilities. (One of these being family.)

It was then that Leo met his "dream girl". Joanne Sprecker. They dated off and on, but it became a "chore" in the winter, especially because Leo did not have to farm.

1964 — an important year in his life, for on June 27, 1964 they were wed.

In all of this excitement and happiness, Leo did not forget his other responsibilities as well — farming. Leo and Joanne lived out on the homestead (which wasn't much then) throughout the rest of the summer and fall months. After the harvest of his second crop it wasn't long before it was winter. This was when Leo decided to pack up his belongings (including his wife) and move to a little motel in Dawson Creek. Leo worked on the rigs for the rest of the winter months, until spring 1965 came at last, and it was back to the homestead for the summer.

It wasn't until April 12, 1965 that a six pound bundle became another big responsibility for Leo and Joanne, a beautiful baby girl. She was the most exciting thing that happened to them since their marriage.

Another year went by and everything was fine, except for when it came time for harvesting. On September 16, 1966 Leo's crop was snowed under and he couldn't continue harvesting. The snow ruined the crop completely. He was then forced to move back to Dawson to live for the winter. Once again he packed up his belongings and his baby, his wife and himself, and moved to Dawson Creek, B.C. for a few months. During this time he worked on the rigs continually to support his wife and child.

Spring 1967 was the start of a good year. By April all crop was sown, and it was a good thing, because

on April 11, 1967, Leo and Joanne had another member of their family — Douglas Leo.

The family homesteaded for the rest of the summer and finally when harvest was over Leo and Joanne packed up their belongings once more, and settled down for another winter in Dawson Creek with Leo continuing to work on the rigs to support his ever growing family.

It wasn't until spring of '68 they decided that this moving back and forth throughout the winter months had to change, so Leo built a small house as well as farming. He bought more land (figuring he needed more land if his family was going to continue to grow as it had been). By the fall of 1968 Leo had harvested his crop, bought more land, and had a home on the homestead for his family to settle down in for the winter months.

1969 — another baby — Wayne Eugene. Leo and Joanne's family was increasing rapidly every year.

1970-71 — crops were good, and things were looking better and better for the Lefebvres.

1972 — the fourth and hopefully the last baby — Annette Rose, born on July 20th, 1972.

It wasn't until spring of 1973 that Leo decided grain farming wasn't all he wanted, so he decided to become a mixed farmer (cattle and grain). On September 26th he bought ten cows to start his herd off.

1974-79 — things looked even better. He had four lovely children, over 200 acres of crop in, some land still to be broken, a small herd of cows, a better and bigger house, and sufficient machinery to meet his needs.

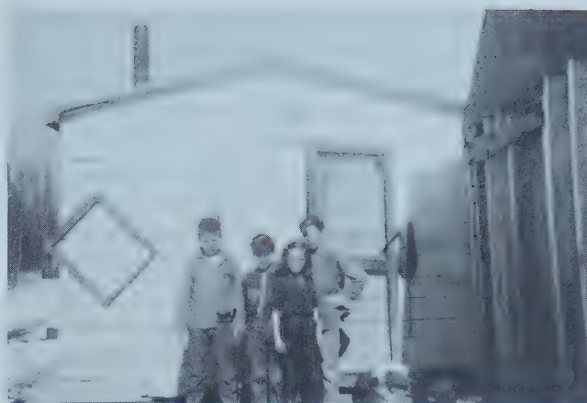
Leo's dream came true — he became a successful farmer. This brings us up to October 10th, 1980.

Leonard Lofgren

I, Leonard was born at Blackfalds, Alberta, of Swedish origin. My wife Ruby was born at Bentley, Alberta, of Norwegian origin.

From the time we were small, we children had heard about the Peace River country. Some neighbors of Leonard's folks were Sathers, Ryes, and Amundsons who moved from Blackfalds to Wanham in the late '20's. Some of Ruby's neighbors — Earl Stevenson, Oscar Luibeck, Olgett Solberg moved to Hines Creek.

In August 1954 we took our first trip to Peace River, a two week holiday with no intention of ever going up there to farm, but before we got home from our holiday we had decided to do that very thing. We listed our farm at Sundre when we got home, and in July 1955 we went looking for a homestead. We looked at land at Keg River and Fort Vermilion, then saw some at Whitelaw. From there we went to Hines Creek and visited Solbergs, then we went to Eureka



Our first living quarters.

River. Ruby's cousin had land east of Clear River and Cherry Point.

We drove the first passenger car, a 1946 Ford Monarch, thirty miles over cut lines where there was no road, from Eureka River to where Howard Vig, and Orville and Raymond Bue were breaking land. We found land that we liked near Vig and Bue, but it was not opened for homesteading soon enough for us.

At Easter, in the spring of 1956, Leonard quit his job at Sundre. We headed for Grande Prairie, and Willard and Eileen Bjorgan went with us. We got to Grande Prairie on a Tuesday night and spent the rest of that week in Clark's Auto Court on Clairmont Road. Leonard went to work for Hugh Allen at the town of Huallen. Willard went to work for a man named Duncan McTavish. The land we wanted at Cherry Point still hadn't opened up.

Leonard sent Ruby to Grande Prairie to the Land Office in late May, and that was when we found out about land at Silver Valley. We went to Silver Valley



Log House built 1961.

on a weekend to look at this land — Ruby, Leonard, and Willard, and it rained! We drove in on the old Silver Valley Road, and got stuck in the mud. Ruby spent the first night in the car, and Willard and Leonard rode in with Benny Frank and Fred Draper. Draper, Willard and Leonard spent the night in Joe Lee's building. Willard and Leonard had some food and made themselves a lunch. Draper got the water for coffee while the other two got the fire going. Next day Willard and Leonard walked up the old oil road and looked at the land they were going to homestead. Leonard filed on the E½ 14-82-10-W6. Willard filed on the W½ 10-82-10-W6, and our places cornered on each other.

When Leonard and Willard got back to Fox brothers farm after looking at the land, Ruby was there, having caught a ride in with Gordon Derkson. Leonard's car was there, but Keith Schallhorn had driven it in for Ruby. We visited Foxes for part of the day then returned to pick up the stuff Leonard and Willard had left at the shack that morning. We decided we should empty the tea kettle. Apparently Fred Draper had dipped the water out of a little puddle in the water run, and when we emptied the kettle the ground was covered with tadpoles — little ones, big ones, and some that were almost frogs.

In 1957 Leonard and Gary broke the first 40 acres. Ruby and Leonard moved onto the land in May 1960. Between 1957 and '60 part of the broken land had been seeded to alfalfa, and in 1960 they seeded 32 acres to barley. The night Leonard finished seeding it rained, and the truck was out in the field for 2 weeks before they could bring it in. Naturally a lot of the crop drowned, and they harvested a total of four acres.

In order to have something to live in they bought an old granary from George Wandler, and after building a 12 x 20 foot shack, this and the granary were the living quarters. Dick Fox helped Leonard move the buildings over to his place with two tractors.

Clayton, Newton, Curtis, and Joanne were all taking correspondence and Ruby taught them in the shack, as well as doing the cooking there.

On June 6th Leonard started moving the pigs up from Hualien. When bringing one load of weaner pigs in a 1950 Ford half-ton, they got caught in the rain crossing a coulee at Bear Creek, north of Blueberry Mountain. They were having trouble making the hills, so Joanne and Ruby got out and walked. Had it not been for Bob McKee coming along, they would have lost the truck and the pigs as well as Leonard over the edge of the bank. They got the load almost home and got stuck again in the last mile and a half, so they left the truck and walked to the house. The pigs spent the night in the truck, and on the 7th

the truck was pulled home with the tractor. When it was pulled up by the house the pigs all jumped out of the back of the truck and ran. Everyone had to take turns chasing and running them down.

For the first couple of years there was ball practice two nights a week. Silver Valley had its own team, so everyone turned up at the ball diamond. In the meantime Jack Bird and a few other people got Moonshine Lake Park established, and after that there were ball games at the Lake every Sunday. Every summer the Junior Forest Wardens and the Girl Guards camped out there, and the younger ones took swimming lessons.

The following is a resume of the Lofgren family to date;

Gary is at home and not married.

Gayle is at Chatham, N.B. She has 3 daughters and 2 sons.

Clayton is married and lives in Venezuela. He has 2 children; a boy and a girl.

Newton is married and lives in Edmonton. They have no children.

Curtis is at McKenzie, B.C. and not married.

Joanne is living in Prince George with her two children — a boy and a girl.

Leonard lives in Malakwa, B.C., and Ruby passed away May 14/79.

In December 1961 Silver Valley got their first school bus. Leonard drove it from then until December 1969, and his run was from Silver Valley to



Group with Bear.

Fourth Creek. The first run had eleven kids: Clayton, Newton, Curtis and Joanne Lofgren; Edna Dyck; Bertha, Elma, and Peter Dyck; Douglas, Billy and David Rae.

In the spring of '63 just before Easter, Leonard ran into difficulty with his run on one trip, and all of the load of kids was out all night. Spring breakup had caused the road to become very muddy, so Leonard couldn't move the bus or he would get stuck. The passengers were: Clayton, Newton, Curtis, and Joanne Lofgren; Edna, Bertha, and Elma Dyck; Doug and Billy Rae; Carol, Danny and Bobby Rempel; Ricky and Starly Seekins; Margaret and Clarence Ronquist. Herman Haugland, a bachelor, made supper for the stranded kids and Leonard, and he cooked every potato he had in his house.

In spite of all the hardships, these were some of the best years of our lives, as we all worked together and did everything together



Family Group.

The Allen McGladdery Family as written by Betty Weleski

It had been ten long years, but Allen was finally able to fulfill his dream. He was going farming! Somewhat apprehensive at the thought of being so far from town and their friends, they packed their belongings and took one last glance at what had been their comfortable little house on the hill for six years. Ugly as the home had been, they all felt the tug of what they were leaving behind. Suddenly the friends they had made over the past years seemed so much dearer, and the journey ahead so long and lonely.

The tiny orange kitten that was given to their eldest daughter was the mainstay to the children on their way to their new home in Silver Valley. Even restaurant meals were frequently cut short so the children could "see if Pebbles was all right".

It took the family approximately thirty-six hours to make the trip from Trail, B.C., and when they arrived they were all too exhausted to have much feeling other than relief. It was muddy, and everything was so glum and so desolate. That night Mrs. McGladdery and the children rested at a friend's place while her husband and the truck driver unloaded the trailer of the semi truck.

The following morning Mrs. McGladdery and the children awoke with much zeal, and could barely get to the farm fast enough. The cabin was tiny and boxes and furniture were everywhere. With a rueful grin they thought of their dumpy little home back in the city and realized that it had been a palace and they hadn't known it.

For the first few days they struggled with their future home, but they realized they would have to seek employment if their family was to eat. They waited for a call from the union. The call came quickly and Julie suddenly felt a sense of deep despair. Quote, "My husband had a job at Fort Nelson, and I suddenly saw myself in the mental institute very shortly if I stayed behind alone". unquote. It must have showed in her eyes, because before the week was up it was arranged that she and the kids were to stay in a Trailer park in Fort Nelson at the company's expense.

Then suddenly harvest was upon the family, and nothing made them happier than to return to the farm once again. This time the family was awake enough to enjoy the beauty of the scenery. The children kept their eyes on that beauty, eager to see all the wild animals. Peace and quietness was everywhere, and fresh air was so plentiful and welcome. Now and then they would smile and compare the "mountains" in the area, to the "hills" they had in B.C.

So it was they returned to their little farm permanently. Carrying a little hate and a lot of love, and a whole lot more expectancy. Things would go wrong and they would curse the distance to town. However, things would go right and they would revel in the freedom. "A free day would come and we would feel frustrated because we were so far from picnic sites, lakes, etc", and then the water seemed so cold and uninviting. They would watch the children playing and think of their dingy little lot in the city, overcrowded with children.

Winter soon came and the thought of moving to town was quickly abandoned. "We were home for good".

Leo S. Marches

In 1919, August 26, Leo married Hazel B. Bergess in Montana, U.S.A., in October 1921 they moved to the Peace River country, homesteading in the Last Lake district. This is where my father Ray Vernon Marches was born in 1929. Ray lived most of his life there and holds many memorable thoughts of those days. He was the youngest child and only boy.

There existed a boundless new land that was to become an important part of Ray's future. The area was north and east of Bonanza, then called Bryan and which has now been changed to Cotillian. This wooded land extended north to the Peace River, west to the Pouce Coupe river and east to the Sneddon Canyon. This area was first available for homesteading in 1952. A temporary recording office was opened for one day in Spirit River. In June the area was officially opened for filing at any Alberta Lands Office. Ray took up a homestead on N ½-18-82-12.

Previously, forest fires had burned most of the area, leaving only a few bluffs. Rolling hills gave way to coulees and canyons. Ray and Bruce Henery brought in a John Deere cat, the summer of '52, breaking approximately thirty acres each. In the spring of '53 the first crops were planted. These were a complete loss as were the 54 crops. Downhearted, these residents moved out.

Ray's mother passed away in 1958 in Terry, Montana, Ray was 29 at this time. In 1960 Ray married Shirley Haugen, in British Columbia. Thereafter they lived in Besberle, B.C., approximately one mile from Shirley's parents. In the winter of '60-'61 they moved to Vancouver. In 1961 their first child was born, Sharon Ann, in '62 their second daughter was born in Dawson Creek, Yvonne Berle, in '62 the family moved to their homestead in Cotillian and into a house built by Burt Peterson in 1952.

In June an oil drilling rig moved into the district. Marshall's Const. built a road, thus opening the area for the oil company. This move was a godsend to the settlers; they could now drive their vehicles instead of walking, riding horseback, or driving tractors around the district.

The summer of '62 was a busy one, hundreds of acres were worked down then the roots burned. The summer skies were full of smoke, the nights aglow with fires. Leo Marches sold his farm in Last Lake and moved to Ray's farm to retire. In the spring of '63 we built a new house, my grandfather, Leo remaining in the old house about a half mile away.

In 1967 Sharon started school in Bonanza, as did Yvonne in '68. Bonanza is approximately 25 miles south. It was in January of '68 that a son was born, Floyd Leo-Vergel. In 1969 we received the power — coal oil and gas lamps were put away. It was in

January of 1970 the third daughter was born, Lorraine Jessie-May. In 1974 the children transferred to the Savanna School, east of Cotillian. All students in the district were bused to this school, which is in the district of Silver Valley.

submitted by Yvonne Marches

Howard and Ileen Nelson

A celebrity resides humbly in Silver Valley. He was the first man to receive penicillin in the hospital in Bentley, Alberta. He is also (jokingly) referred to as the "Mayor of Silver Valley".

The Nelsons heard of Silver Valley through their friends, the Lofgrens whom they came to visit several times. One time their truck got so balled up with mud that they had to abandon it and walk the rest of the way there in bare feet through the mud. It is a wonder then that Howard and Ileen decided they liked the place and filed on the S.18-81-9-W6.

Howard and Ileen had quite a large family, five children: Pat, Gloria, Marlene, Delbert, and Diane. However, in 1963 when they moved in, all but Diane went back south to Sundre to live. Eventually however, they all drifted back to the Peace River area. Diane went to the Fourth Creek School and got her daily exercise, by walking a mile or so to the bus pick-up.

That first year it rained all the time, and Silver Valley showed only her pouty side to the newcomers.



Howard and Irene Nelson.

Nelsons ran a lumber mill for the first three years in Silver Valley, selling lumber for about \$125.00 per thousand board feet. Neighbors soon learned that no one could outfigure Howard when it came to lumber.

Nelsons first home was an old shack that they had Benny and Frank Dyck pull up from the old Rodacker mill. In 1964 they, along with a number of other Silver Valleyans, went spruce cone picking, a grand sport of stealing the squirrels' store of winter food. Back then they got approximately \$3.00 per bushel, and who says crime doesn't pay?

Howard was quite the dashing beau for a few years when every Halloween he'd receive a box of candy from "the Silver Valley Girls". His wife soon put a stop to that.

In 1966 Nelsons moved to a place three miles out to Spirit River so Diane could finish her high school. During that time Howard worked at a pulp mill in Hinton. Two years later they let their heart strings pull them back to Silver Valley.

1971 found Howard and Ileen working out on Cat. Camps. Ileen cooked and Howard ran a cat for the promising sum of \$3.75 an hour. After four years they moved back to their farm in Silver Valley to stay, and went into the cattle business.

The fun they have raising cattle is unequalled. During the cold winter months their cows would often step in a warm cow pie to stay warm, and thus invented the first cow platforms — but the cows didn't have all the fun. Howard still laughs over the time he was pulling the calf of a wild cow. He wrapped one end of the twine around his wrist and the other end about the calf's leg sticking out. The cow started running, and Howard was right after her. She pulled him along through a slough, and then he sat down and decided to enjoy the free ride, and he did until his glasses broke. He somehow managed to extricate himself from the binder twine's hold and phoned up a neighbor to help him pull the calf. A friend asked him why he didn't just cut the binder twine with his jack-knife. Howard answered with a question, "Have you ever tried pulling your jack-knife out of your pocket with one hand while you're being drug 30 miles an hour with the other?" Nelsons have now started up the lumber business again — an alternative.

Howard and Ileen Nelson celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary this summer of 1980, along with a good turnout of friends and relatives.

Jerry and Holly Pitman

We first moved to Silver Valley in 1968 — six months after being married. Jerry worked with my Dad (Jim Hale) clearing land, beekeeping and farming. It was difficult to make a living on the farm so we

spent the next six years moving in and out of the area, working to supplement the farm.

We moved back to the Peace country this last time in 1972 and became more seriously involved in honey producing and now run 650 hives from our Silver Valley farm.

Our three children were all born here in the Peace area, Kelly in 1968, Kristen in 1969 and Erin in 1973. We live on my Dad's original homestead as do the rest of his children and their family — Donna and Roland Boucher and Jim and Margaret Hale.

The Bill Rempel Family by George Rempel

Bill Rempel made his first appearance in the Silver Valley District in 1952. He was twenty-nine at the time. After making the decision to settle on the land, he obtained a homestead lease for a half section of land on the east half of section 24-82-11-W.6.

In the spring of 1953, he and three others journeyed up from Calgary in a blue 1939 Plymouth to this desolate area. Although the government funded Lassiter Company had cleared the land, the ground was still full of roots that had to be picked. Bill spent the summer in an 8' x 16' tarpaper shack while he worked on his land. He went back to Calgary during the winter months, returning to work the land in the spring and summer. This continued until 1958 when he helped build a house of lumber that was made to withstand the bitterly cold winters.

In 1960 he built his own permanent dwelling, and one year later he brought his wife, Justina Krahn, to join him. Their four children Joyce, George, Norma and Sam were all born in the Spirit River Holy Cross Hospital.

Television was not introduced into the district until the sixties so the radio played an important role. It provided a link with the outside world, since the closest town, Spirit River, was approximately eighty kilometres away. The radio not only broadcast news and weather reports but also provided a source of entertainment, as did the numerous books that were read.

The arrival of the telephone in the early 1970's greatly hindered neighbourly visiting. Most roads were ungravelled and there were no ditches until 1960.

When asked whether he regretted having come to the Silver Valley area, Bill briefly replied, "No".

Richard and Tena Rempel

Dick and I both grew up with "pioneer" parents in Saskatchewan. Since there was no land left in our area to be had, and not much in the line of work

available, we decided to look elsewhere. We came to Alberta and for the next ten years or so worked at different jobs and places: Road building, Forestry work, Sawmill, and also three summers on a farm at Champion, Alberta. The one thought that was foremost in Dick's mind however, was to own a piece of land and work the soil. Perhaps it's the challenge of being on your own and proving to yourself that you can make a go of it. Whatever — when an acquaintance of some years back, known for "telling tall tales", told Dick there was homestead land available around Olds and Didsbury, he decided to look into it further. A rumor it was indeed! the personnel in the land office in Calgary were rather amused, but told him they knew where there was lots of **good** homestead land. That's how it happened that in the fall of 1952 Dick and some of his brothers and friends set out to view homestead lands in the Peace River country.

The three ton truck they went with, served as sleeping and eating quarters for the men. They had no trouble following the many trails and cut lines, since the weather was good and the ground dry. Dick was quite interested in the vast amount of land that was available, some of which was already cleared and broken, but also many raw units as well. Before spring came, the interviews and paper work was completed and we had a half section of land.

Since I was expecting our third child in June, and Ruth, our oldest, was in school, it was decided Dick would go and try to put some crop in and the family stay in Calgary till harvest. As it turned out, when the men reached the big creek north of Blueberry Mtn. store, they found the bridge washed out and a very strong current. Dick and friend Pete decided they would try and get across somehow. In the process they came near to drowning, but once on the other side, nothing could stop them from getting to that

certain land location! They recall it was a warm sunny day, which made the 18 mile walk through mud and water somewhat better. By midnight they reached Aron Derksen's homestead. Derksen's had moved in just a few weeks earlier and missed the rains. Dick says "Jessie's borsch never tasted so good as that night!"

It turned out the land was not productive. The wheat that grew was a good grade, but didn't stool out and yielded approximately 8 bushels to the acre. The Agriculturist that was approached about what to seed didn't seem to think it would make much difference, and barley was suggested. We tried that, with no better results than with the wheat. Later on my cousin from Bonanza told us we had to seed clover to build this soil up. He even brought bags of the seed and insisted we plant it. Dick was disappointed; he wanted to be a "wheat" farmer. We planted the seed, but had difficulty getting it started. It seemed to come up in spring, but would winter kill. The following spring we would be down on our hands and knees looking for those tiny little plants. In the effort to let it establish itself the willows would get ahead and soon the field looked like breaking that had gone back.

One year we had a nice stand of flax, but the ground was so wet, due to all the rain, that there was no chance to harvest it. We waited around till the end of November before heading back to the sawmill where we knew we could make some money to pay for the summer's expenses and next springs "farm" operations. The wet summers made it very discouraging. Distance was always a factor to be reckoned with, whether going to town 50 miles away, or seven miles to the neighbors.

After the first summer on the homestead Dick had to replace all the brakes and wheel bearings on his new 1953 I.H.C. three ton truck before he could use it in the bush that winter.

In the spring of '54 when we returned to the homestead from our bush camp, we decided to bring our H.D.5 cat. along to help with farm operations; also to skid out some of the huge fire killed pine that were still around. These were later sawed into 4" timbers and built our first house.

To get back to the trip, before we got to Spirit River it was raining, and apparently had rained for some time already. We stayed overnight in the Spirit River hotel, parking our loaded truck on the highway, for fear of getting stuck in town. At 8 a.m. next morning we headed west. However before we got to the Silver Valley turn off, we bogged down right in the middle of the 49 Highway. Dick backed the cat off the truck — rearranged the rest of the load, hooked the truck onto the cat and carried on.



First Shacks.

Around midnight we got to Fox's, the first homesteaders on the line. The dim light in the window was a welcome sight. We were invited to stay and take a break, but I was anxious to get to our destination — surely it couldn't take that much longer! There was water everywhere, no sign of a trail, and we were still approximately 12 or 13 miles from home. Whenever the cat couldn't pull it, the winch line would be rolled out and the truck winched on through. By 3 a.m. we pulled into our yard. The cat had never been unhooked — it was quite a trip. Home never looked so good! A granary and an 8' x 24' homemade trailer. We were very fortunate that our family were all good travellers. Ruth our oldest was 13. Carol was going on 5, and Danny the baby was 9 months. Dick's brother George had come along this trip, so he and Dick changed each other off on the cat. However, it also changed George's mind on taking up land in the Peace River country.

Spring was always such a lovely time — the days so warm and calm. A relief to have the long trip over with again, and still too wet around to be able to really do too much, a kind of a "relax" time before the busy summer with always more and more roots to pick and land to get ready, and mosquitoes to fight.

One summer, neighbors got together and Dick took the cat and they blazed and dozed a trail to the Mighty Peace River. Many a happy time was spent at the river, also some anxious moments wondering if we'd make it back up the hill before the showers came. As long as the land didn't produce enough we kept going back to our small sawmill operations west of Calgary for the winter's work and earnings. By spring Dick would have bought another piece of used machinery that he would need on the farm. We would then load the truck up and start all over again. This carried on for 4 or 5 years.

Ruth was used to Correspondence school lessons and did fairly well. Carol started out the same way and her work was always so well done the teachers in Edmonton didn't want to believe it was all her own work. Comments like "All Carol's own work?" finally got to me and I sat down and made a list of the many things that occupied my days, plus a baby to look after and "nil" conveniences and wondered if she still thought I had time to sit down and do Carol's work for her — no more comments!

We were, however, pleasantly surprised one beautiful fall day to have a teacher from Edmonton visit our correspondence pupils. It felt good to know they were really interested.

Sunday School those first years was also by correspondence. The Peace River Bible School at Sexsmith had quite an enrollment of mail pupils. The mail was something to look forward to, but also

sometimes weeks would go by without mail, since you had to have more than one reason to go to town. Town always meant a 2 day trip, and a tractor usually could not be too far away. It was difficult to know which would be the best "detour" around which water hole!

Church services were listened to by radio. Canada's National Bible Hour with Premier E. C. Manning was a regular program I remember. It wasn't too long however, till we had student ministers come out from the Presbyterian church in Blueberry Mtn. during the summer months. We would meet in homes and receive a blessing from God's word and the fellowship of getting together.

When road conditions improved and more and more children arrived, we had Vacation Bible School for a week every summer for the children. It is interesting to note that many of the pre-beginners of these years are now married and some serve in our church as Sunday School teachers etc.

The community hall was built in 1960 or '61. This building was to serve the community for church services and other planned activities, and it did that for many years. Later on a church was built on the same community property. It is under the "Canadian Sunday School Mission" of Three Hills, Alta., with headquarters in Winnipeg, Man. At the time of this writing, another church is being built, some 10 miles east and south of here. We praise the Lord for His working in hearts and lives, and the interest that is shown toward spiritual things, not just the "here and now".

As we look back to the early years of our stay here, we see that many changes have taken place. The farmsteads as a whole, look vastly different. For



Dick Rempel Family, 1954.

the most part you see comfortable farm homes with modern conveniences. The land too, as we learned how to handle it and what was required to build it up, is now able to produce a good living — when the weather co-operates.

We have always considered farming a way of life. Working together as a family is what we really wanted to do, and the farm is one place where this is possible. Hardships and discouragements! yes we had those as well. The most discouraging I suppose, was to find out your crop was not producing enough for you to get by on and improve your operations. The biggest hardship, or perhaps I should say, the most “nerve-wracking” was the transportation problem. However it was not till 1957 that we had a summer dry enough to be able to build roads.

That spring after the crop was in, we decided to go back to the mill for a couple of months. When we came back in August the high grade was in, and what rejoicing! Seemed like road regulations had been altered, and with the thought of power lines and telephones for the future, road allowances had been extended. This of course, left our yard much closer to the road, and our “biffy” on the road allowance — a standing joke for quite some time. We were so happy to see the road and be able to drive in without difficulty, nothing else mattered — here was progress at last.

Regardless of conditions, we do have many fond memories of getting together for visits, ball games, picnics and so on. It took longer to get from one place to another, but life seemed a somewhat slower pace too. I don’t know where the years have gone. Time does not stand still. This, you realize when you see your children married and your grandchildren around you.

Our family, like many others is somewhat scattered. Ruth married Jim Fullerton of Bragg Creek, Alberta, where they now reside with their three sons.

Carol married Herb Hamm and they live in Calgary with their two children.

Dan married Jane Redekopp and they live half a mile from us. They have a little boy.

Bob, whom we always called our “real” homesteader, since he was born in this part of the country, lives two miles from us. He married Karen Redekopp and they have two little girls. We are happy to have some of our grandchildren near enough to watch “grow up”, love, and **spoil**? The three foster children that were with us for quite a few years are still in or around Edmonton. We hear from them occasionally. We are not sorry we chose this place to settle down in and raise our family. This is a beautiful country, with every season having its own beauty and

attractions. We have clean air to breathe, and lots of elbow room.

Some may feel that with independence and progress the true “pioneer” spirit is forgotten. In our early years here, it was not uncommon to have a neighbor bring a piece of meat — even if it took a tractor for transportation. The job of picking roots and rocks was made lighter by sharing the work load.

A year ago last April we had the misfortune to lose our home in a fire. Not only friends and neighbors showed their kindness and concern, but many folks whom we had never met. It was simply overwhelming. We shall always be grateful for the love and concern of each one.

Since all of my diaries were destroyed I may be a bit off on some dates I have mentioned. Much more could be said, but I’ll close with this meaningful verse by the Swiss Family Robinson:

“The whole earth is the Lord’s,
and where, as in His sight,
you lead good and useful lives,
there is your home.”

Bob and Karen Rempel

After the birth of Karen Redekopp, the Karl Redekopps stayed at Niagra Lake for two and a half years. Their next move was to Coaldale where Karen spent thirteen years. Becoming rather weary of town life, the Redekopps decided that moving to a farm was less depressing, so their departure was made with enthusiasm, as they were leaving the town for good.

Karen was fifteen when they arrived at the new area, Silver Valley, Alberta, in the fall of 1972. This place was beautiful! What a joy it was to have all that space outdoors to run! Karen and her family lived near a splendid coulee of leafy trees and running streams. This coulee was connected to the Mighty Peace. They lived four miles from the grand Peace River itself.

The first three winters after they settled, they received an over abundance of snow. Because of winter conditions, Karen was unable to go to school, so she spent the first year studying correspondence. The following two and a half years she took schooling at Savanna School, which was just fifteen miles from home.

The first three years, Redekopp’s driveway, which was two miles from the main road, appeared pretty swampy the majority of the time. Karen’s boyfriend had to walk in on occasion, sometimes with a gun and flashlight for company (friendly bears detoured through our land). Other times, Karen’s boyfriend would resort to driving the tractor through her yard. Karen recalls the time they had fun taking a

shortcut because their road had washed out. At one mud hole they had to winch twelve times, not to mention the ones before and after that one, as they headed out to the main road.

Bob Rempel and Karen were united in marriage in the spring of 1976. He had been born in Spirit River and raised in Silver Valley. He farmed together with his father, Dick Rempel, and brother Dan (who married Karen's sister Jane). Dick Rempel had homesteaded in Silver Valley in the year of 1953.

After two months of hard labour, Bob and Karen moved into their new house. Luckily, their power was hooked up before they moved in, so they had an immediate supply of heat and lighting.

Bob is now working at a gas plant, and they are both proud to announce the births of their two daughters; Angela born February 27, 1977, and Alison July 11, 1978. They are satisfied with where they live, and love the country.

Dan and Jane Rempel

Richard Daniel (Dan) Rempel was born in Calgary, Alberta. His parents, his two older sisters, and of course three month old Dan, moved to Silver Valley in September 1953. Dan began his farming career at the age of eight when he drove the tractor for his dad. Dan began custom swathing for other farmers at the ripe age of thirteen.

Jane Redekopp, Dan's future wife, arrived in Silver Valley in the fall of 1972, along with her parents, brother, and three sisters. Jane was seventeen then but because Savanna School didn't offer Grade XII she could not graduate, so she stayed home and helped her parents settle.

Jane and Dan married in September 1974 and now reside in Silver Valley. They have one son, Regan Daniel Rempel who was born in April 1980. Dan still custom farms today for a living.

William Reay Family

How the Reay family came to live in Silver Valley. Around the time that the land north of Blueberry Mountain, across the Josephine, was first opened to settlers, Wm. Alfred Reay, Wm. Bueckert and Kelly Rockwood filed on it. That summer Wm. Reay borrowed a horse from a friend in Blueberry and rode into the area now referred to as Silver Valley, in order to look the land over.

That winter they received word their application had been accepted, therefore Bill Reay rented Tom Gillespie's farm in Blueberry. That spring Bueckert, Rockwood and Bill took a team of horses and looked over their land in Silver Valley. On the way back to

Blueberry, they met Fred Draper who decided to send in an application for himself.

In March Fred harnessed up his horses and headed for Silver Valley with a load of feed, while Bill was following with a load of lumber. That spring after school was out in Blueberry, Fred moved to Silver Valley. He lived on the S.E. ¼ 18-82-10. There were very few houses in the district at this time, most families lived either in granaries or in trailers.

In the fall of the next year a meeting was called to discuss the possibility of getting a school. The Silver Flats school was built, this school could not be called Silver Valley School as there was another school with the same name in southern Alberta. It was built on Twp. 81-10, which is currently the property of Ralph Frank. School ran only one term as the teacher Dorothy Smith left the Valley and it was decided there were not enough school-aged children to qualify for another. The school was moved to Fourth Creek as there were more students in that area.

William Reay left the area and moved his family to Nova Scotia, arriving back in 1961. His wife Almedia had two children born while in Nova Scotia, Bruce born in '59 and Doris was four months old at the time they arrived back in the Valley. They farmed on E ½ 17 until 1968 when they sold their farm to Daniel Friesen and moved to W ½ 3-83-10. Prior to the move Donald, Alexander (Sandy) and Allen were born in Pouce Coupe in 1962, '63, and '64 respectively. Hardships were endured as the struggle to clear and break the land continued. In '66, a second girl, Betty-Jane was born in Spirit River.

As time went by, work became scarce. In addition to this Bill and his family were approximately 15 miles from the nearest phone, Almedia couldn't drive and Bill's mother was 83 years of age and in need of periodic hospitalization — therefore they came to the conclusion that they had no alternative but to move. He sold the improvements on his farm to Alfred Dyck and moved back to Nova Scotia. They stayed the summer and then returned to the Valley. Edith had been born 6 weeks earlier. After winter was over they returned once again to Nova Scotia, this was the year 1970.

In August of 1974 the Reay family arrived back in the Valley once again. James, their last child had been born in Nova Scotia. After spending a year on Dave Ronquist's farm which they had rented, they were able to rent a section of land from Charles Russel with an option to buy it after three years. In 1979 they moved on to the SW ¼ 83-10-6.

They have lived and grown, shared bad and good alike, whether it be in Silver Valley or some other locality.

submitted Doris, Alexander Reay

Mason and Leona Ritchie

Around the middle of November 1963 Mason had taken our secondhand 8' x 35' house trailer with our necessary belongings in it, to Blueberry Mountain and parked it near the store. On November 22, 1963 Mason and our two daughters Diana and Sheila, also our cocker spaniel dog, Trixy, left Delburne, Alberta in our 1952 green Chevy car, headed for Blueberry Mountain and a new way of life. The boys, Ronald and Allan and I joined them four days later, mainly because our car was so loaded down there was no room for us.



Ritchie Family, 1963.

When they arrived at Blueberry Mountain about 6:30 that evening the weather had really turned cold, but with the help of Len Morrison (at that time an employee at Bird's Store) Mason was able to move the trailer to Stan Ash's yard at Gordondale. Between fighting the elements of 15° to 20° below, and two flat tires on the trailer, they finally were able to bed down around 2:30 a.m.

How we came to move to this area was mainly for work and partly for speculation. Mason had worked for Grant MacMillan for 8 years in the Delburne Service Garage. He offered Mason the job of looking after his construction camp as he had taken on a contract with the Silver Slope Co-op., to brush, pile and break their large amount of land. Since we were taking this job, we decided to take out some homestead land too, and we were lucky to get it in the Silver Valley area. At the time of moving north Diana was eleven years old, Sheila seven, Ronald four, and Allan two.



Barney Archer and two Wolves.

Mason originated from Vanguard, Saskatchewan, where he was born, raised and educated, and is of Scottish descent. I was born on a farm near Hughenden, Alberta, and received my education at Okotoks, Alberta. Both my parents are of English descent.

The first winter '63-'64, we lived at Gordondale, and Diana and Sheila were bused to Spirit River for school. I cooked and boarded MacMillan's cat. operators, which numbered anywhere from 2-9 men. In June 1964 we moved closer to the work, which was into the yard of Barney Archer.

It was so dry when we moved I couldn't believe dirt could be so powdery. However, it soon became dampened, as we had a very large amount of rain starting the 26th of June and not letting up until the first of September. During this period there were very few days without rain. By my diary I note the twelve first days of rain without one letup. Work of course stopped and the men had to leave until they could get back to work, which was the whole summer. Mason had never been home on a full-time basis before, and in such small quarters he figured he knew what it must be like to be in a hornet's nest with the hole plugged.

After the first three weeks our larder was becoming very scant and so was Barney's, so Barney decided to take his tractor and pup trailer and try to get to Bird's Store, some 25 miles away for supplies. He made it, but it took three days for the round trip. The kids didn't seem to think we were in hardships and truly had a ball with the mud. Barney had made "chains" of wire for their tricycles so they could ride them in the mud. Also the frogs were out by the millions. I looked out one day to see the boys had



Skinning Moose.

filled my large square wash tub full of frogs. The girls took to making things, and by summers end had made a doll house complete with furniture and woven rugs. It was amazing what could be made out of odd bits of string and wool, and cardboard boxes. Mason, Barney and I played a lot of Chinese Checkers (the only game we had), and we haven't had the urge to play it since!!

One nice day of the summer when we hadn't had rain for a 24 hour period, we decided to try and make it to the store again, but with the pickup. However, the first five miles were ungravelled and we had to keep digging out the wheels. Reaching Howard and Eileen Nelson's we stopped to see if we could get them anything at the store. Howard was out, and Eileen gave us a list for her. We only got another mile and balled up with mud again, so Mason figured it best to give the road another hour or so to dry. He told me to walk back to Nelsons and he'd follow me after he dug the wheels out again. Walking was also impossible — my boots got bigger and bigger, heavier and heavier, and I really tired. Several old-timers of the area had told me that bare beet were best for walking in mud, but I figured not for this town gal! However, I was giving it second thoughts now, who was to know — ha. It worked great, and when I reached Nelsons again the first thing I met was a wet pair of pants, shorts, socks, shirt and boots on the sidewalk. When I reached the open door behold there

was Howard looking very relieved of all his wet clothes and very naked. He was not long in removing himself and getting into some dry clothes. He really figured I'd best wear a bell from then on, and not bare feet either.

That summer was truly an initiation into this new frontier land for us, and the many tales I could tell would fill a book — like the day I was coming from Spirit River up the Silver Valley road — gorgeous day, but half way up this ungravelled road rain had hit and I got so balled up with mud that I spent the next five hours in the car with my four kids who didn't have boots, and if we left the car we were eaten up by mosquitoes. It was either cook in the car or be eaten up — we chose the car. Another time we went berry picking, got lost and didn't find any berries, but came home with four baby rabbits, after walking five extra miles.

We were very lucky tho', as the spring after we moved, electric power was being installed and we signed up for it. Also a new high grade was gravelled in 1964, making travel easier. In 1965 a new school was built — Savanna School, with grades 1-9, and only 4½ miles from our homestead. We wintered one more year at Gordondale, but moved to our homestead in the spring of 1965.

Those first years, most all the husbands had to seek work elsewhere, so all the wives and children were left to do the work on the farms. It was really a closeness we'll never have again, as all the neighbors were like one big family, each helping the other out. Notes via the kids on the school bus or the bus driver, were our biggest means of communication. Telephones were installed in November of 1971. Grades 10 and 11 were also taught that year, then in 1975 Grade 12 was taught.

Oh, the many hard years! but looking back they were good years, and I know made us better people



Christmas, 1966.

for our experiences. I sincerely feel this life style, with our wonderful neighbors and friends in these districts are truly a good part of our children's great love of the land and the country. We are truly thankful how well our family did grow up to be Lord-loving and responsible adults today. Diana married John Laninga on April 16, 1971. He also homesteaded in the Fourth Creek district. They have three lovely children, 2 boys and 1 girl. Sheila took post secondary education and is a registered respiratory technologist. She married Douglas Horn on September 28, 1974 and they are living in Whitehorse, and have one daughter and one son. Ronald is at present farming the family homestead plus his own land. He married a local girl, Laura McCullough on July 28, 1979. Allan is still on the farmstead with Ronald but works on construction full time. He just graduated from Savanna School in June 1979.

Leona and Mason Ritchie

One of the highlights of our times in Silver Valley was a "Mock Wedding" that was put on to help celebrate Kay and Bob Scobel's 25th Anniversary in the fall of 1972.

John Craik and Mason Ritchie were asked to be bridesmaids (Mason at least 6'4" tall, and John Craik at least 300 lbs. in weight). In the picture John is on the right side beside the dark haired beauty Mason. Audrey Rehaume is bride, Julie Craik is groom, Mary Fox and Helen Derksen are best men. Father of bride with beard and shotgun is Judy (Lario) Raskauskas. Preacher is Betty Knoot who could have won an award for her part.

It was truly a jolly time and one of the funniest mock weddings we had ever seen.



Mock Wedding.

The Scobels

by Ken Scobel aged 17

One could not come right out and say, "Our heritage was the best!" However, it can be described between unusual and grand! As we first journeyed to this barren land (as my father refers to it) we saw and

felt many experiences. Not many foolhardy souls would travel this far, to accomplish so little. Our accomplishments then did not seem significant, but as we aged, wisdom grew (in at least some of us), and it became apparent that our achievements, though they started tiny, would in some way, some day grow to be noticed and distinguished.

Reflecting back, it seems that we had partaken in an adventure that had not been completely fulfilled, as we had come from Acme, Alberta (a small, but quickly growing town that had held many opportunities). We had travelled almost 500 miles to our new destination; to a place that was to be our home for the twelve years that were to follow; Silver Valley, Alberta. Little did we know that we would be entering a place that was situated with leering trees, unfamiliar animals, and at many times, the endless battle of mosquitoes. I guess one could not actually say we were smart; leaving everything, just to venture out here into unknown territory. To analyze it I would say that the north brought our family more prospects in the search for good farm land and some place where we could stand up and shout, "This is mine!"

It is a long struggle from way back there. I believe that the last twelve years (to 1980) here in Silver Valley have been the grandest. My grandmother now resides in the Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River. Sure, she has been through a lot, working in London and being a city kid. Then all of a sudden she had to learn how a farm functioned. Those were the days that brought strain, getting up at sunrise and not getting to bed until sunset. That must have been difficult. People today do not seem to realize just how lucky they are.

If farm life today were compared to that of yesteryear, the two would be found incongruous. In the early days there were no fancy combines, no fancy plows, disks, drills, etc. to make the work load easier. Most farmers owned a plow and some horses, but they had no tractors, and when harvest time came, they had no trucks to hold the grain so they could easily and swiftly move it to town. Horses and wagons had to be used, and while that may seem funny to some, to the pioneers of farming it was a struggle next to death's door. I guess today we are just groping in the dark for our heritage, as we seem to just follow the crowd. We cannot regret what we did, for we have done our best.

Even though my dad's health is not too good, I guess the one thing that keeps him living on a farm is the peace of it all; the clean air, the flowers, the trees, the stillness of the wind — but much more than that, it is his farm in general. It relaxes him more than a life-time in the city ever could. He has farmed all his

life, and I guess that is what he knows how to do. At the age of 58, what can he learn now that he doesn't already know?

When my mother married she did not want any part of farming. She stated to her parents that she would not marry a farmer. Well, here she is 31 years later, and guess who she married? Mom, though she lives on a farm, lives almost two different lives. She is not only a farmer's wife who helps in all of his farming activities, but she is also the community's postmistress and takes her work in stride. I feel that without the post office Mom would not be as strong as she is, and would not be the greatest.

Everyone should have a sign that says "Home Sweet Home" — not necessarily where the buffalo roam, but a place that they can call their own to which they can go for refuge, for comfort, for safety. Where, when they want to be alone, they can go across the countryside beside the still, blue water, the bubbling brooks, and the sculptured meadows.

For me, the country is too lonely, and I just hope that for the rest of my family their love for the country will be maintained and their spirits strengthened. Our heritage takes place one day at a time — it comes and it goes; it brings the past to our future, and the future to our past.

Joe and Else Seekins

With all worldly possessions in tow; a car a truck, two trailers, 1000 rounds of 22 shells, and a supply of canned tomatoes, Joe Seekins, his wife Else, and their kids Don, Karen, Brenda, and Rick pulled into the City of Grande Prairie. It was the early spring of '54, and the usual Peace Area climate persisted. Snow was in abundance, wind was in abundance, rabbit was in abundance — money was not. To fill in time, and the supper table, Don targeted rabbits during their stay. Else cooked rabbits and tomatoes — over and over. Both can be broiled, stewed, baked, fried, boiled.

It was a whole month before the climate allowed them to move on again — northward. This step



Seekins Yard.

reached Spirit River. The snow here still held out. About two weeks later, upon the return from checking for passable roads, the family found Karen had gone — hitch-hiking. She made her way back to Lethbridge to stay with relatives. Bushed by the moose country — and she hadn't even seen the place yet.

Finally, arrival was inevitable, with a little (or maybe a lot) of help from the Fox Brothers, passage was made. A new life began. Due to the Lassiter Project, the Seekin's land had already been cleared. That fall after Don came back to the N.4-82-10 from the threshing crew, their new house was completed.

The first winter found Brenda taking her schooling in the convent in Spirit River. Else pregnant, and staying with Rick in Rycroft for that reason, and Joe and Don the only persons left in the Valley — save Schallhorns — who owned a farm not too far distant. It was nice to have neighbors.

In the spring Else returned with Rick and a smiling baby girl — Starly. The place became home.

In 1965 the death of their mother brought a tragic flaw in the happy lives of the family. Else's death took much of the sparkle, and brought problems. In '67 the homestead was sold, and Joe packed up and left for Spirit River. Later he moved to Dawson Creek where he, in '75 also passed away, leaving his children to continue their already separate lives.



Family Picture.

Don and Freda Seekins

Don Seekins came to Silver Valley as a young man from Lethbridge with his Mom, Dad, and siblings in 1954. He found vast moose country, long cold winters, friends, and home. Something must have been appealing because he stayed.

In 1958 a piece of land was filed on

(E. ½-8-82-10) — his own homestead. Even though the Lassiter project was to have cleared the land, the bush had regrown to the extent that the job needed to be redone.

Didn't he notice the mud in spring? In 1960 (on April 2) Don Seekins became the husband of a girl named Freda Hansen, from Edmonton. In that same year, Freda filed on the W. ½-8-82-10. This was not only a coincidence, it was very handy.

Didn't they notice the insects during summer? The site for the house was planned carefully. It was in amongst a stand of aspen, on the higher ground of the section, and down a picturesque, and cursed — to be called; "worst driveway in the Valley". The house came up in '63.

Didn't they notice the early winters? Evidently the cold of winter was noticed. It wasn't until 1966 that the whole year was spent on the farm. This was mainly because the first of their children had reached school age. Besides that, a new oil heater made it possible; so they stayed.

Didn't they notice the way the trees look when they're all frosted? After all the various vocations that Don had tasted, it was decided that farming was as good as any.

Didn't they notice the good times down at the Peace River almost every Sunday? In 1976 a terrible accident took the life of Freda, and seriously injured the youngest child of the four, Steven. It was difficult to believe and hard to accept.

Didn't he notice the way that farming is always a one-step forward — two backward operation? But he and his kids stayed. Somehow, he had noticed the beauty of the Valley.

The Steinke Family

by Don Steinke

The Steinke family consists of Rudy and Viola, and their four sons. Lorne is the oldest, then Larry, Don and Dale. They lived in Granisle, B.C. for seven years before Mr. and Mrs. Steinke and their two youngest sons moved to Alberta. In Granisle, Mr. Steinke worked in one of the two mines, where the oldest son now works. He is married and lives there. The second oldest son is attending NAIT where he is studying in the field of electronics. The youngest two boys are going to the Savanna School in Silver Valley.

The Steinkes bought the property in 1978, about two years before they moved onto it. They worked on the farm during the summer holidays, and other times when Mr. Steinke could get time off from work. The Steinkes moved onto their land — a half section — in the summer of 1980 and built a house. Their land location is E ½ 2-83-19-W6.

Suhai History

Alex and Colleen Suhai purchased their homestead from Nick vanRootselaar in the spring of 1975. They put in their first crop by weekend farming, and moved in to live there that June from their home in Dawson Creek. At the time they had three children — Tammy, Wendy, and Cindy.

Alex originally came from Tilley (Brooks), Alberta. He has been around the Peace River country since about 1963 and has worked on various jobs such as fireman, to construction worker on dams. Colleen came from Quesnel, B.C. At a very young age she fell in love with the young dashing Suhai and married him.

The first winter when Alex went off to work, Colleen had her brother Allen come to stay with her because she was expecting a fourth child. The day before Alex left was the coldest it had been all winter; their thermometer broke. On February thirteenth (Friday) at thirteen minutes to midnight, their first boy Chuck finally got there.

In '76, Suhais built their barn to hold their pigs and cows. Since then Colleen has been milking cows and packing water. She has gotten quite strong, and likes to push her weight around.

Their fifth child, Frankie, also a son (!) was born during that winter on December 13. Thirteen is supposed to be unlucky, but it brought them two sons; after three girls — that was great.

In '78 they built an addition to their trailer. All seven of them had been living there and it was getting quite crowded, especially when company came over. Now they have lots of room, and Alex and Colleen actually have their bedroom to themselves.

Suhais are very friendly neighbours and help people out a lot. Colleen is an active person in the community. She is involved in Forest Wardens, Kindergarten, and getting her kids off to school in the morning. She can usually be seen at Bingo games with her troupe of kids. Today the Suhai family is in a mixed farming business and raise pigs, cows and kids.

Earl Teghtmeyer and Family

Earl, his wife and three boys moved from Calgary to Silver Valley in the summer of '63 and homesteaded on Section 33, Township 82, Range 9. When we moved up from Calgary about all we had was an old 3T cat and a little bit of breaking equipment. The nearest road was about eight miles from the farm and the house we lived in wasn't much bigger than the average grain bin, and it got pretty crowded at times.

When we moved up here in '63 Grandpa said that Dad was nuts because we wouldn't get power or road for ten years. He was wrong, because the road came



Tegtmeyer children and baby moose, 1963.

in in '64, and the power came in around '65, not very long after the road. During those first few years about all we lived on was moose meat, just about all the rest of the food we grew in the garden. Before we moved up, Dad had bought an old 303 rifle and when the old lady found out, she thought he was nuts spending money on a gun, but that old gun saved us more money than anything we ever bought.

We moved to Rainbow Lake in '69 but we moved back in 1971.

Otherwise we spent all of our school years at Savanna School. Ken had to take his first year by correspondence because the school wasn't built until the following year.

In '74 we got running water as well as cattle; after that Dad stayed home in the winter most of the time, Before that he would always go out in the winter to make money and then stay home and work on the land during the summer. Dad owns a section and a half of land so, as you can imagine, we kids picked our share of roots since none of the land had ever been broken and cleaned up. It was a couple of years before we got it in shape so we could farm it.

We built a new house in '74 and now it feels almost empty at times because both Ken and Lloyd are not at home very often, Ken graduated in 1977 and Lloyd in 1979. Both Lloyd and Ken drove bus in their final year of school.

For those first few years it hardly seemed worth it but in the last few years the price of land has finally started to go up and we have just about got all the machinery paid for, so things are starting to look not too bad.

The Ray Tegtmeyer Family

by Rita

The spring of 1962 was the beginning of the biggest change we would ever see in our lives. Ray along with his brother Earl, Jim and George Young and Rita's brother Ray Hopkins took a trip to the Blueberry Mtn. area, to see about the new homestead land the government was opening up. Being a very wet couple of days none of them actually got to see the land, so filed sight unseen at Grande Prairie.

Ray filed for a homestead lease on the E½ 4-83-9-W6 and received a reply on Nov. 20, 1962. The land was ours for \$306.25, plus a share of the crop until title was obtained (duties to commence in 1963.) In December we came up to see what this land of ours really looked like. John Salamon was cutting brush not too far away, so took us over to our homestead. It was a beautiful, mild sunny day as we first set foot on the homestead. We were surprised to see the bush so light, only poplar and willow; we came away very impressed, full of hopes and dreams. Once back home in Airdrie, we took the papers to the land office in Calgary to have them finalized.

The next few months were full of plans and activities getting ready to return, to start cutting brush. Ray, his Dad and Earl arrived at Walter Weleski's homestead early on April 4, 1963. This was the end of the road, the rest of the way was only cutlines and an old oil road. After unloading the "Cat", they spent most of the day plowing their way in. They had a truck and trailer with the cutter, some plywood for a small building and many other needed supplies. Earl also had his power-wagon loaded down. The first thing done was to put up a tarp-lean-to, to stay in while they got the 12'x12' shack built. The snow was



Tegtmeyers leaving Airdrie.

around 3'-4' deep on the level, so they were unable to stay to cut the brush. Earl came back again in May, but now it was too wet to get in over the trails, so the first cutting didn't get done until later in the summer.

After the seeding was done on our rented land at Airdrie, Ray came back up to help Earl build a house for himself, Beth and the boys, Ken, Lloyd and Allen. They also started a pole barn on our place for a few cows and pigs, then came back to put up hay.

The end of July Ray, myself, Vicky and Maxine 3½, came up with three cows, some pigs, 4 cats and 2 dogs. This trip was by far the worst of all the many we made. We had a lot of tire trouble, so instead of making the six hundred miles in one day, we had to spend the night at one of the camp grounds between Whitecourt and Valleyview. I am sure the campers must have thought us completely crazy. Ray carried water from the creek to the cows and we all picked grass to feed them. Ray had to crawl into the truck-box and milk them the best he could, which he gave to the pigs and cats — who were in an old thirty-dozen wooden egg crate (when finally let loose, we figured we would never see them again — did they take off!! but soon made themselves at home). We spent the night on the floor in the camp-kitchen — a good thing it was a warm evening.

The next months were very busy building our 16 x 24 house, working on the few acres of cleared land, putting up fences and fixing on the barn. The weather was just perfect, no rain and very warm, in fact up in the '80's and 90's some of the time. Back to Airdrie we went to harvest and get the last of our things ready to move. On Dec. 5, 1963, we arrived back to stay for good; so many changes in one year! That first winter was very mild and not too much snow. The men were

busy cutting and piling brush, they also worked some at Sopkow's sawmill over east on the crown land.

Vicky was on correspondence for the last half of her grade four. I had to change my schedule around the house to allow for this. My old ways of shopping had to smarten-up too, no forgetting, especially the staples for everyday living. Winter wasn't bad to get out as the trails were frozen, but oh, come spring break-up or a lot of rain, did we have fun — found the best way was with the tractor and manure spreader, as it was high enough to get through some of the water holes. We would go east to John Salamon where the truck was, then around by Francis Dolens, Fourth Creek School and on to Blueberry Mtn., about 25-30 miles, to pick up groceries, gas and the precious mail. We also had to go this way to get to Dawson Creek or Grande Prairie. When it was dry we could go west to Leonard Lofgren's and out. These trips made for a very long day, often not getting home until 12 or 1 a.m. The girls and I never made too many of these trips, especially that horrible wet year of 64. That had to be the longest year we ever spent.



The Homestead Aug. '63.



April '63: At the Homestead.

I believe we had a record of 27"-30" of rain that summer of 64', such a drastic change from 63, which was just the opposite, almost too dry. Everyone and everthing was just about eaten alive by mosquitoes and no-see-ums, especially the baby pigs. We had smudges going when they were the worst, but they still lost blood.

Despite being back so far from other families, we seemed to have a great deal of company those first years. It's sort of ironic now, but the very first one in was Bob Paul with the grader to smooth over our trail through the bush, never dreaming that one day his son and our daughter would marry. Through the summer months, men would come in to work on their homesteads, not too many women and children those first yeas. A few of these early neighbors were Sandy Giffen, Gordon Cheyne, Gunther Zwilling, George Offer and the Young brothers. Of course the relatives just couldn't wait to see what we'd gotten into. If it



Aerial View, 1975.

was wet, it meant having to pull them in and out, which didn't help their concerns for us. One of the biggest surprises I ever received was when a knock came out of the blue one day. Since I was busy punching down bread, Vicky went to the door, but soon came back with large eyes, saying a man with a "Big bow and arrow" was at the door. Sure enough, it was Winston Woods on his way in to his homestead.

The second winter they started putting the power in from Spirit River, but it wasn't until the following year, in the spring, before we were using it. The roads were a lot longer coming but eventually they did too. With so many families moving in to stay, the need for a school more centralized than the one in Fourth Creek was apparent. Leo Hewson, Howard Nelson, Ray and many others I can't recall now, spent a lot of time before Savanna got started. It was a big day for Vicky to finally be going back to a real school. How she enjoyed being with kids her own age again! The first Principal was Rene Joly, John Rinke drove the school bus for the east area and Leonard Lofgren the west. Maxine didn't start until the second year. She had the idea it would be all play and no work, but soon had to change her mind about that.

More and more new people moved in over the next few years, what with the school and roads here, this meant we could get together oftener. Housewarming parties were the most popular for awhile, dances at Silver Valley and Fourth Creek Halls were the thing too. The whole family went and everyone had a great time.

Once we got a break from those wet years, things started to improve considerably. One of the biggest boosts to our area was when the Seismic company came and they started to drill for gas and oil.

On September 18, 1971 our third daughter Jenny Marie was born, but passed away May 8, 1973 after

open heart surgery in Vancouver. She is buried at Calgary beside her brother Steven who died 1961 at almost 3 years.

After taking her Grade 12 in Spirit River, Vicky took a technology course at S.A.I.T. She worked in Calgary for awhile before marrying Ken Paul, son of Bob and Lorene Paul, who are old-timers of Fourth Creek. Ken and Vicky live in Grande Prairie, but spend a lot of their spare time on their land west of us, planning to move out to stay eventually.

Maxine graduated from Savanna in 1978 and is in her third year of nursing at the Univ. of Calgary. She married Andy Jenne, son of Mr. and Mrs. Rudolf Jenne of Wembley, on Feb. 13, 1981. They are living in Calgary, but plan to come back when finished.

Thinking back over all the years, good-times and bad, Ray and I have no regrets about moving here. It was a real challenge for us and all the others who came too. We can't help but marvel at all the changes that have taken place. Makes one wonder what the next 15-20 years will be like for us personally and the area in general.

Herman Toews

I came to Alberta from Manitoba in 1946. In 1948 Rhoda Loewen and I were married at Linden, where we lived till we moved to the Blueberry Mountain area.

As our family was growing up and we heard of the many opportunities in the Peace River block, we decided to try for a homestead. In 1962 together with Lewis Toews and Leonard Johnsons we went to Edmonton and filed on the E. 1/2-29-82-9-W.6 which is in I.D. 20.

In 1963 we started clearing some land, using a John Deere tractor and gyromower. In 1964 we had our first crop. It was a wet year and the crop just paid for the harvesting.

In 1966 we started to build a house, and in July of that year we moved into it after selling our place at Linden. It was a dismal rainy summer; our house was unfinished and we had no electricity. It was a great day in September when the electricity was brought in and we could switch on a light above the kitchen table.

Today we have a comfortable home with conveniences, and the roads are good, so we can go visit our neighbors. The land yields a good crop and responds well to the weather. We no longer depend on moose meat as we did the first few years. We have our own hogs and chickens although we still appreciate moose.

We feel the north country has been good to us, and the experiences have been rewarding when we think of them as a future for our children.

Donalda married Allan Isaac.

Valerie married Louey Isaac who is Allan's brother.

Judy married Roy Toews.

Neil and Clark are still at home.

Our children all live around here, except Roy and Judy. We have 15 grandchildren. We are thankful to God who supplies our daily needs and a peaceful part of the world to live in.

The Lewis Toews Family

told by Lewis

As new settlers in this community we look back to October 17, 1964 when we as a family arrived in Steve Shippit's yard in the Silver Valley — Fourth Creek area. Here we squatted till the middle of January 1965 when a warm chinook blew in, creating summer conditions so we could move onto our new homestead. Into the sticks from the open prairies what a contrast! At that time I could truthfully say only the Lord knew why the leading was so. We had left grain farming and a good dairy, modern home, friends and family ties, and in exchange we had a patch of bush. There were people who question what might be wrong with a man who would move a family of eight to the North in the middle of winter, but we were thankful for modern equipment and paved roads which led most of the way to our destination.

My father, H. L. Toews had been a homesteader before me, on the prairie, in 1910. Those were the hard tough years, days of hardship and financial struggles. He is still living, a hearty 96 years old, in the old folk's home at Linden, and we still enjoy one another's company.

We were fortunate to bring with us some heavy equipment which we set out to use, clearing a yard site and farm land as well. One experience worthy of note: As I hauled in a D7 cat on a highway trailer, I neglected chaining it down, (on the prairie it was never needed), but as I travelled down our new road and everything apparently normal, all of a sudden the truck and trailer swayed and heaved from side to side. I looked back to see the cat upside down in the ditch — what a sight! It did, however, give me an opportunity to check out the undercarriage — there were only slight damages otherwise. From then on, we did things somewhat differently in the Peace Country.

As we went about clearing land, we were soon to learn cutting brush was different to cutting hay on the prairie — to make a straight strike out for cutting a line meant looking back to a marker, not looking ahead into the bush. Since we needed roads, we have found it to be a way of life, working for the Department of Highways every year since 1965.

Things have not always been roses, especially the long treks to town — most notable of all was the old Bear Canyon Crossing after a rainy spell, but then it paid off going to Blueberry store as you met the neighbors, and you could rehearse your week's activities and find they all had much the same problems.

I do feel deeply indebted to my family generally sharing a keen interest in the many activities that it took to make my place inhabitable and productive. Our children have all found a place in life:

Virgil married Alana Isaac and they have one daughter. He left northern Alberta for New Norway, Alberta.

Darell married Olivene Isaac, have two girls and one boy — live in Fourth Creek area.

Roy married Judy Toews, have two sons and live at Stettler.

Orrin married Stella Reimer, they have two children, a girl and a boy, live in Silver Valley.

Donald and Robert farm in the home area.

Norman and Faye live at home still.

The Lord has been good to us.

Wandler, George and Rose Marie

George and I left Medicine Hat on the 17th March 1953 for Silver Valley. During the summer we were on the homestead, and the winter we spent at Lesser Slave Lake, where George worked for the Fox brothers at a saw-mill.

The roads were very bad during the summer in Silver Valley, so George chopped off the fenders on his truck, and we were never stuck again. Whenever he heard someone was stuck in the mud, he always gave him his remedy.

As the people started to move in, we used to have parties at Aaron Derkson's place. George would play



George — what you call stuck.

the mouth organ and every body danced. There were good times and hard times and lots of hard work.

Before our first baby was born, Tommy Denis stayed with us so it wasn't so lonesome. Also Mr. Doll, my Dad from Saskatchewan, would come and help us. Our first son, Ronnie was born Feb. 21, 1955 at High Prairie, Alta.

We left the Valley in March of 57 to return to Sask. to farm in the Central Butte area. It was tough going on the homestead, but when it came time to leave, we found it pretty hard — we had met some nice people and had enjoyable times.



Swing for baby.

The Weleski Family **by Betty Weleski**

My dad first came to homestead in the Silver Valley area in August of 1959. Even now he believes the real reason why he came was for a challenge . . . a change from the daily routine.

To quote him: "Life had changed from day to day, and so had my jobs. I had worked almost everywhere across Western Canada; in the pulp mills of British Columbia, on the telephone lines in Saskatchewan, on the pipe lines in Alberta, in the Husky Oil Refinery in Lloydminster, as a truck driver at the Thompson Nickel Mine in Manitoba, and as a registered seed buyer in Spirit River. Perhaps I had money but I needed a place I could call home — a change in my life; a challenge . . . and homesteading out here was to be that challenge!"

At the time his possessions ranged from approximately six thousand dollars and a pickup truck to a few other minor possessions.

In the fall of 1959 he cleared the land, and the following spring he picked the visible roots and planted his first crop. Meanwhile, times were becoming tougher. Expenses were growing, and Dad was forced to work out for several winters to subsidize the farm.

In the following year Dad met Louise Badiuk, formerly of Spirit River, and a couple of years later they were married. My mom had been out here before but she never dreamed of living in an area with nothing but water, mud, and bachelors.

Quote, "Living conditions were extremely poor compared to now, especially when we found ourselves living in a one-roomed granary with no electricity, no running water . . . no proper roads, not even neighbors we could rely on in times of trouble". (Unquote)

In February of 1964 I was born. However, since Dad was working out Mom and I spent the winter with my grandparents. It was not until July of 1965 that I came out to the farm for the first time. I spent some four weeks on the farm and then went back to stay with my grandparents. Once again Mom and I spent the winter there while Dad went out to work.

In March of 1966 my first sister Kathleen was born. Later on in the spring of the same year we moved to the farm to stay.

That fall we moved to the west half of 27-22-81-9-W.6, land which we were renting at the time, and which currently belongs to Clarence Nelson. While we were living here, my second sister Lorraine was born, and also my first brother Tommy.

In autumn of 1970 we moved once again, this time to N.½-33-81-9-W.6. This was to be our permanent home, and until now it has been. In May of 1972 my second brother Jimmy was born, and two years later, in February of 1974 my third sister Carol joined us.

Times sure have changed from the time my parents came out here, and the hardships they experienced seem ancient to the teenagers of today.

Whitburn

Berghs

written by Marcel

Born in Belgium in 1948, I immigrated to Raymond, Alberta with my parents, my brother, and two sisters in the spring of 1951. After several odd jobs and a disastrous short-lived hog operation, my father took on the job as beekeeper for Reservoir Farms Ltd., which in time he bought out. As a youngster I grew up with the bee business and decided to make a career of it.

After several years of working with my father and C. F. Koehnen & Sons in California during winter months, I decided to start on my own. As my father did not want a partner, I looked for an area in which to start my own beekeeping operation. The year before, my sister Alda had married Romeo Labrecque, and had told me of the vast clover fields around Spirit River. Consequently, in the fall of '69 I came and looked the area over, and decided to move.

In the spring of '70 I arrived from California May 3rd, with 325 hives. I rented a building from Harold Fitzsimmons for the summer to be used as living quarters and extracting plant. After a rewarding busy summer I decided to make the country my home, so began the search for a piece of land, which eventually led me to buying 30 acres from Marion and Graeme Thomlinson.

The following summer was spent running the beehives and falling trees for the building site, roadway and power line. The previous fall I had purchased a one room cabin from the Thomlinsons which I moved onto the acreage. The honey extracting was done in a building north of Blueberry Mountain loaned to me by Vern Galbraith. His help in many ways, was greatly appreciated in the establishment of our business and home. Although extracting facilities were cramped and a bit primitive, I managed to harvest a bumper honey crop which was put to good use in building a new extracting plant on my own place for the following year.

During the summer my sweetheart of 4 years had moved up here from Calgary and had taken a job at

the Royal Bank in town. As I had proposed to her in Calgary that spring on my return trip from California, it was decided that she would come up to see if she liked the country and would also like to make it her home. On September 25, 1971 I married Hendrikje Roest and that same fall we left for California for the winter.

Hennie was born in Holland in 1951 and immigrated to Calgary with her parents in '52. During her younger years some time was spent on a farm west of Red Deer. Her middle teen years were spent running a bulk gas and oil business for her dad, at which time we met. The family returned to Calgary shortly after, where her dad returned to his trade as a machinist.

The next several years were spent building a small house, water supply, roadway, etc. Bears plagued us, especially in '73, as we lost 25% of our hives to their appetites; shooting 24 didn't seem to thin them out. Since then the use of electric bear fences has helped us get along better with the bears, in that we don't have to shoot as many.

For several winters, due to the high cost of package bees from California, we overwintered the beehives in the Okanagan Valley. Last winter ('79) we successfully overwintered especially wrapped hives at home. This is the direction we plan to work on for the future.

Although we've had many setbacks, we still look forward to the coming years as we feel we have a definite future here.

Cheyne, Patrick Gordon

Gordon Cheyne was born in Longside, Aberdeenshire, Scotland on August 16/21. He attended Longside Public till 1937, then worked in a grocery store for 2½ years.

He joined the Royal Marines in March '39 and served in the Mediterranean, the East and West Indies, and in Germany in 1951.

Following his term in the Marines, he went to work for the Forestry Commission in Scotland, and



Showing lamb to a small admirer.

after spending several years there, decided to come to Canada.

He travelled to Canada by C.P. Air and landed in Vancouver May 3/58. He worked in a Rose Nursery in Vancouver for two or three months then moved to Calgary where he worked for Mallet Construction for several months. The following year he went to work for the Alberta Forest Service at Blairmore and Coleman, and stayed there from 1959-1962. His next move was to Grande Prairie, where he worked for Canfor for two years, meanwhile filing on a homestead in 1963: S ½-29-83-8-W.6.

He worked out in wintertime and on the homestead in summer. He got a job as towerman and spent six summers at Copton and Torrance Towers. The tower at Copton had no road access so he was flown in by helicopter, taking in supplies, etc. Once a month the helicopter brought in supplies, and the towerman usually stayed on the job from May till September, with a break after two months. In cases of emergency or sickness the helicopter would take the towerman out.

He worked at Moonshine Lake one winter and at the tower in the summer. Then in 1973 he sold the homestead, and bought a quarter section in Whitburn, known as the Jamison Homestead. He moved a small house onto it and has lived there ever since, raising a few sheep, and working out part-time.

The Cramers At Whitburn as told by Joseph John Cramer

I can trace my family tree back for about two hundred years. My mother's folks left Pennsylvania and settled in Ontario a short time after the War of Independence in the United States in the year 1776. They were known as New Empire Loyalists, and my Great-Grandfather Hope was the first man to plant apple trees in Peel County. My father's Grandparents

came from Cologne, Germany, in the year 1860. They had four sons, William, John, Charlie, and Joseph. John was my Grandfather. They made their home at Paris, Ontario, then in the year 1880 Mr. and Mrs. John Cramer homesteaded at Carberry, Manitoba. At that time they had two sons, Charlie age seven, and Frank age one year.

In the year 1904, my father Charlie Cramer took a homestead at Cutknife, Saskatchewan, and in the year 1928 I took my homestead at Whitburn, Alberta. In March 1928 my Uncle John and I were the first to squat on what was later known as the Whitburn district. As we were both known as John Cramer, it was not long before John Cramer Sr., was known as Unk. Cramer.

My father and brother Frank brought in two car loads of settlers effects in October 1928. Mother, Evelyn, Marianne, Russell, and Robert came in November 1928. They lived on a rented place just west of Spirit River that winter. Unk. and I had built a log shack on his land the spring of 1928. That fall we built a house and barns on father's land; S.E. ¼-22-79-8-W6, and in March 1929 we all moved to Whitburn. Father farmed at Whitburn for sixteen years. Of the fifty-four men I recall that squatted or filed on land at Whitburn in the years '28, '29, and '30 Lawson Scott and Graeme Thomlinson are the only two men still living in the Whitburn district.

The following is the Charlie Cramer family:
Charlie Cramer — 1873-1953



Mr. and Mrs. John Cramer, Charlie and Frank.



Charlie Cramer Family Group.

Ethel Cramer — 1885-1971

Evelyn Cramer — 1904-1975

Russell Cramer — 1908-1970

Joseph Cramer — 1906-

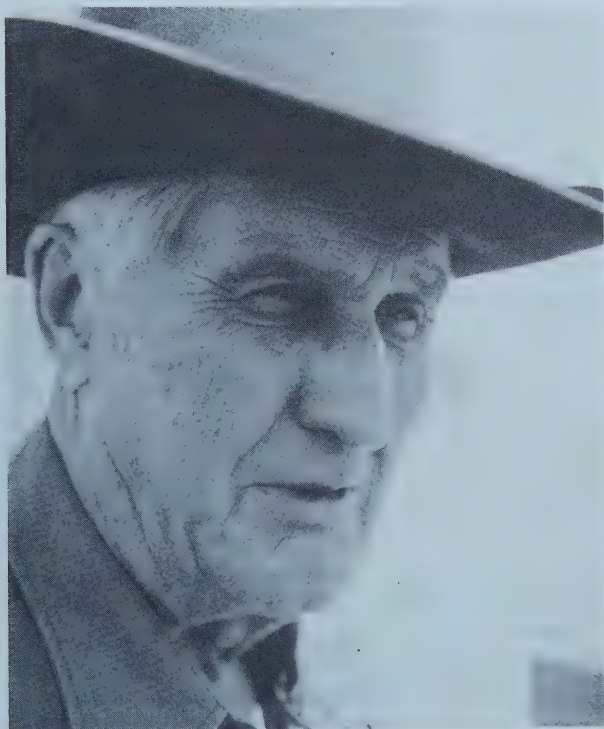
Frank Cramer — 1910-

Marriane Cramer — 1917-

Robert Cramer — 1921-

Frank Cramer lives at Fort St. John, B.C. —
Marriane Richards lives at Killam, Alberta —
Robert Cramer lives at Beaverlodge, Alberta, and
Joseph (John) Cramer, now retired, lives at Watino,
Alberta.

For a pastime I do handicrafts. I have shown my
handicrafts at Art and Craft shows and summer fairs



John Cramer.

at North Pine, Hudson Hope, High Prairie, Manning
and Valleyview, also Edmonton, Vancouver and
Armstrong, B.C., and have received many prizes
(280 ribbons and 6 trophies).

As I Spent My Time In The Peace River Country

Joseph John Cramer

I took my claim at Whitburn in March, 1928. I
worked on the farm for Vic Mitchell for a month,
then got a job as a carpenter at Spirit River. Orm
Hudson's barn, Jack Craig's house, and Prestville
School were the main jobs, then during that winter I
worked in a logging camp. In 1929 and '30 I worked
on land survey during the summers, and in logging
camps in the winter.

In 1931 work was hard to find, so I took a saddle
horse and looked over the Dawson Creek. Fort St.
John, and Hudson Hope country. In the spring of
1932 I went back to Hudson Hope to build the big log
house on the Beattie farm, on 20 mile creek at Gold
Bar. This log house kept me in work for the next
sixteen months.

For the next five summers I was horse wrangler or
cook on big game hunting parties, trapping and
working in logging camps in the winters.



Pioneer's ball and chain turned out to be a winner

By BOB GILMOUR

WANHAM — Joseph John Cramer is a big, white-haired man with a big brown hat and faded work clothes, and likely as not he's puffing a home-made cigarette.

A homesteader in the Peace River region in 1928, he's just one of the many septuagenarian settlers still spry and active in the Land of 12-Foot Davis.

Mr. Cramer, 70, of the nearby community of Watino, attracted a lot of attention at the Alberta plowing championships here recently.

It wasn't just because of his colorful life and appearance that he was a centre of attention, but also because of his display of a broad variety of painstakingly-wrought handicrafts.

For Mr. Cramer, who says he's a member of a generations-long family of pioneer homesteaders, possesses the craftsmanship of his hardy forebears.

Now retired, he's won 200 ribbons and three trophies in the past nine years, while exhibiting at seven fairs in the Peace River circuit.

In 1880, his great-grandfather homesteaded at Paris, Ont. In 1880, his grandfather homesteaded at Carberry, Man. And in 1904, his father homesteaded at Cutknife, Sask., he says.

Only 24 years later, Mr. Cramer continued the westward trek and ventured into Alberta's Peace River region, settling 20 miles west of Spirit River.

In those days, he recalls, it took almost a day to get from his homestead to town, by team and wagon. Now it takes him 20 minutes in his old half-ton truck.

It was 1929, the year the Depression set in, that Mr. Cramer took up wood carving.

Among the honors he's won have been a first prize and shield in 1970 at the Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition, for a wooden ball and a length of chain he carved out of a piece of wood.

During the plowing championships here, Mr. Cramer displayed another wooden chain he carved — by jackknife — from a single piece of wood.

He also displayed wooden signs — made of hundreds of pieces of wood inlay, and a spinning wheel on which he spun wool and then knitted socks, toques, mitts, and slippers.

Mr. Cramer says another of his hobbies is gathering "junk" to make recycled material.

An example, which he displayed, was a 12-inch candlestick. He made the base from an ornament atop a wooden coal heater, the stem from part of an organ, the candleholder from a piece of copper plumbing pipe, and the tin-craft from a spray can.

Another of his hobbies is carving diamond willow — into table legs, walking canes, and lamps.

"It's strictly a pastime," Mr. Cramer said, while rummaging through an 18-by-18 inch cardboard box which contained the makings for his lunch — and included a butcher knife, frying pan, bread, cheese, jam, and utensils.

"If I sold it (my handicrafts), it would be work," he says, "and I don't like work."

In 1940 and '41, I built a big log house for Jack Ardill, and a log house for Vic Peck in Hudson Hope, and also did some carpenter work at Fort St. John.

In 1942 and '43 I built barges at Waterways, and worked on the Alaska Highway at Fort Nelson.

In 1944 I bought a farm west of Spirit River. I sold this farm in 1955 and bought another farm at Watino, where I am now living.

In my time I have built a store for Jack Bird in Blueberry Mountain, a house for Lawson Scott at Whitburn, one for Dan Galbraith and Chris. Hirning at Spirit River, Bill Glowaski at Rycroft, Ollie Emerson at Eaglesham, and Jack Reeks and Wayne Bolster at Watino. Also in this time I have built three house for myself, which I resold.

Mike W. Durda

Mike Durda was born in Poland, and when he was 14 years old his parents put him on the train for Turin, Italy, where he was to continue his studies. During the train journey he decided he did not want to go to the school, and made up his mind to run away. He would go to his older sister in Kansas City, U.S.A. He jumped off the train and made his way to Antwerp, Belgium, where he found refuge with a kind family who took him to live with them. He was there for over a year and then found a chance to stow away on a ship bound for Canada. He planned to spend some time in Canada before heading for Kansas, as he knew his parents would look for him there.

When Mike arrived in Canada, at age 15, he

headed west and found work in a sawmill at Fernie, B.C. He worked there until the next spring and was intending to return to Poland to visit his parents, but then he heard of the Peace River country where a new area was opening up and there was good land available, so he decided he would go and see it. He journeyed to Edson and then made the trip over the new Edson trail to Grande Prairie, helping with the construction. The year was 1911 and he was 16 years old.

The next year he spent working on a farm near Clairmont, and hauling freight and mail between Grande Prairie and Edson over the trail. When he turned 18 he filed on a homestead in the Clairmont district. In 1924 he married Mary Metz. Mary was born in Kansas, U.S.A., later moved to Oklahama, and in 1912 came to Canada with her family. They first settled at Monitor, Alberta, and in 1916 they came by ED&BC rail to the Kleskun Lake district.

Mike and Mary first lived on his homestead north of Clairmont, later sold that place and bought a farm in the Bear Lake district. They lived there until 1929 when they sold the farm and moved into Clairmont where Mike owned and operated the Clairmont Highways Garage. In 1936 the farming urge took hold again and they moved to a farm west of Grande Prairie. Mike and Mary had four children, Paul, Lena, Mary Anna (Teenie), and Francis.

In 1946 they decided to retire from farming and moved into Grande Prairie. After three years of town life, the pioneering spirit once again prevailed and

Mike took a homestead in the Whitburn district. He built a cabin in Grande Prairie, and after moving the cabin to his homestead in 1949, Mike and Mary moved to Whitburn. They were soon joined by Paul, while the younger children remained in Grande Prairie to finish school, after which the two youngest also moved to Whitburn.

When Mike Durda moved to his homestead he bought a Cat, and with some welding assistance from Bill Kosowan he built a brush cutter, piler and root rake, and began clearing and cultivating the land. The new land was ideal for growing Foundation and Registered seed, and the Durdas won several prizes for their Alsike, Oats, Rye and Flax, at seed fairs in Grande Prairie, Fairview and Calgary.

In the 1940's and '50's, Highway 49 and the Blueberry Mountain roads were not gravelled, and in the spring and during rainy spells became almost impassable. The Ksituan Hill (known locally as The Kechigan) on the old road was especially bad, and many a time day or night, the Durdas hauled vehicles out of the muck. Durda's Corner became a regular stopping place for people from north of Blueberry Mountain who would leave their cars and trucks there and make their way home by tractor. People were always made welcome, and one Good Friday, fourteen stranded motorists had dinner at the Durda's. The District Nurse, Miss Alma Ferrier, quite often asked the Durdas to drive her on her rounds when the roads were bad.

The first phone in Whitburn was installed at Mike Durda's place in 1957. He convinced AGT that a phone was needed in the event of sickness or emergency on the road, and they installed a pay phone. Electricity came later, in 1964.

Mary Durda passed away in 1964, followed by Mike Durda in 1965, and Francis Durda in 1966.

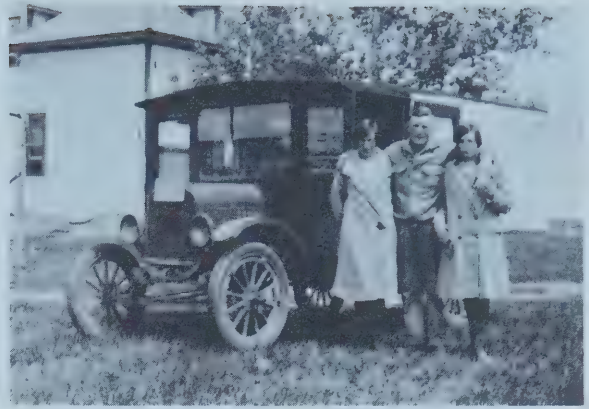
Paul and Teenie still live in Whitburn and specialize in raising registered Simmental, and Hereford cattle. Paul is a licensed A.I. Technician.

The John Hamilton Family by Mrs. Hattie Rappel

My parents were Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hamilton from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. I, Hattie, was born at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, and I had two brothers and two sisters. I always had very poor health.

In 1928 my parents decided to move to the Peace River country, as the crops had failed in Manitoba on account of the rust. Mother was especially happy to move to a new country. The change of climate did me so much good. My health improved and I have been healthy ever since.

Father and brother Aliston shipped the stock and



Camper ready to leave Manitoba, 1928. Hattie, Percy and Eva.

furniture by rail and came with them. Brother Percy built a camper on the Model "T". He slept on the seat in front, while mother and we three girls slept in the back. We cooked our meals on the way. The roads were poor and travel was slow. After being held up for repairs, etc., and heavy rain, we sold the camper in Edmonton and came the rest of the way by train, and arrived in Spirit River on July 12, 1928.

The freight had arrived so father and the boys filed on homesteads at Whitburn. They cleared and broke the land, and built a two-story log house, a barn and other buildings. There was someone on every quarter section in Whitburn at that time.

For entertainment we had ball games and visited the neighbors. Later a hall was built and dances, etc., were held. Much later a school was built. Mrs. Lawson Scott kept the Whitburn Post Office.

We girls worked in town, or on farms until we were married and had homes of our own. Later father had a stroke, so we sold the farm and built a house in town.



Camper arrived at homestead.

The Jamisons, Whitburn and Ksituan by Sid Jamison

My mother, Martha Russell was born in Campbelltown, Argyleshire, Scotland. She went to Northern Ireland to work, and there met and married my father, a native of Holywood, Co. Down, Ireland. My father was a master plumber, and his ancestors were builders. Many of their buildings still stand in Holywood.

I was two years old when my father died in 1912. In those days large families were common, and I had five brothers and three sisters, all older than I was. We lived in Belfast for a long time, but later moved back to our ancestral home town of Holywood.

Ireland in the 1920's was a land of unrest, and there was the same type of violence as in the 1970's. Perhaps this was the reason the Jamison family decided to emigrate, but I think it was because two brothers and a sister had already emigrated to Canada and U.S.A. It wasn't unemployment, as we were all working at good jobs, but one by one the family was leaving, so my mother decided we would all go. So in September 1926 we began life in Chicago, Ill.

Most of us missed the even tenor of life in Ireland, but gradually we got used to the hustle and bustle of U.S. life. Thomas, Albert, and Walter tried a new venture by buying a farm near Grandview, Manitoba. It was good land but polluted with Sow Thistle, so they decided to cut their losses and return to Chicago. The idea of clean land was born, and homesteading looked attractive. Letters to the Canadian Government suggested land in Alberta, so Albert and I were elected to go ahead and locate land.

The snow was deep in March 1930 when Albert and I arrived in Spirit River, and filed on homesteads in Whitburn. We also filed by proxy for my brothers Walter and Thomas Jamison. We were real green-horns as far as homesteading was concerned, having come from city life in Chicago, but we learned.

The snow was melting when Albert and I decided to begin our homesteading careers. Charlie Brennan agreed to take us to Whitburn for \$15, and I must say

he earned every penny. His horses and wagon battled the mud and snow, and eventually we arrived at Ernie Dunham's place. Ernie had a small shack but made us welcome, and that was our residence while we built a log shack about 20' x 20' under the supervision of John Cramer. Eventually my mother and brothers Walter and Thomas arrived and we began clearing land.

It was a ten hour day with no Union and no coffee breaks, but we did clear about thirty acres of land, mostly small willow and poplar brush, that first summer. Walter and I abandoned our first homesteads. I located on the western edge of Ksituan, and Walter about three miles northeast of me on fairly heavy poplar and willow land. More settlers soon arrived and all the immediate area was taken. The Solomiany family with sons, Bill, Matt, and Fred; the Fred Sandul family, the Steve Baduik family, and Casper Drezewicki family were all near neighbours, and the battle to survive the depression was on.

The fall was the time to finance our winter, and off we went to Spirit River and the harvest. Walter and I worked for the Grimm family between Rycroft and Spirit River, and I learned the art of stooking on a



Log Building.



Sid with dog.

45 bushel per acre wheat crop, and I learned to build a proper load of bundles which was hauled to the threshing machine. At first I'd lose part of my load, but before long I became proficient, and so my apprenticeship proceeded.

With our harvest wages we decided to stock up with food, and went to Nick Baduik's store in Ksituan. Nick also did blacksmithing. We borrowed a team from Nick to haul our purchases home: Sacks of flour, 100 lbs. sugar, salt, beans, dried fruit by the case — all staples. I believe our bill came to around \$80.

That winter Walter and I took a contract to clear 15 acres of land for Phillip Nagel near Rycroft at \$7.00 per acre. This was poplar and willow bush with some clear spots. We worked all winter, finished the job, and bought a cow with most of the money. I wrote a short article about that trip home with the cow, which was published in the Ponoka Herald.

Changes took place. My mother returned to Toronto and New York, where she passed away at the age of 87. Thomas suffered from stomach ulcers (a legacy from World War I) and he went to Toronto for medical treatment in 1937. He died in 1939, a victim of cancer.

I resided on my own place, and Walter and Albert on theirs, and soon we all had title to our land, with around 30 acres cleared and broken. It was a hard life with very little money, but that was no stigma as no one had money. There were the Saturday evening hockey broadcasts, with Foster Hewitt weaving Television pictures in our minds, the local dances, the school concerts at Christmas, and the big annual event, the community picnic. Admission to the dances was 25¢. The ladies brought lunch in lieu of admission fee, and it was normal for a dance to go on until around 2 a.m. The picnic dance often lasted until 3:30 or 4:00 a.m. The orchestra in those days, was Tom Lindsay with his violin, Albert Jamison on the saxophone, and myself on piano accordion, but many others played; Graeme Thomlinson, Bill and Fred Solomiany, and the Almond boys from Happy Valley. The orchestra was paid from admission fees, and varied, but usually each player received \$1.00 or \$1.50 per dance.

Church services were rare, but I remember one service at Whitburn where a student minister rode a horse from morning service in Gordondale, sat on a log and donned a tie while swiping at mosquitoes, held afternoon service in Whitburn and then on his horse again for evening service at Blueberry Mountain.

The declaration of war changed many lives. Albert Jamison joined the R.C.A.F. He married in Vancouver and never returned to live in Whitburn.



Sid, with Wes and Stan Foulston.

He died in Vancouver. Walter and I joined the Army. Walter was some time in Canada, but after D Day was posted to the Regina Rifles and service in France, Belgium and Holland. He returned to his farm, eventually selling it. He died in Ksituan, and was buried in the Field of Honour, Spirit River. I was posted overseas in 1942 and spent several years in England before going to France.

I returned home early in 1946, married Connie Daly, and eventually settled on a farm near Ponoka. We had two children, Carolyn and Tom. I got into Holstein cattle, so my main income was selling milk, but in 1966 we began a new venture, leasing a rural store and gas pumps at Nelson Lake. I sold my cattle and eventually my farm. Carolyn finished school and took a nursing course. She married Leon Newton, and now has two children, Bradley and Rhonda. They live in Botha, Alta.

In 1969 we moved to the town of Ponoka. Connie passed away in 1970. Tom finished high school in Ponoka, and attended Grant McEwan Community College for two years. He now lives and works in Edmonton.

The decade of 1930 to 1940 was a period poor in monetary returns, but rich in experience, and gave me a legacy of very loyal lifelong friends. My best wishes for the future of a part of Alberta that enriched my life and lives on in memory.

Dreams

In the early 1930's we had very little land under cultivation, so feeding stock was a problem. The Blueberry Mtn. folks allowed us to haul straw from their stacks, and it was usually a cold trip for a load of straw.

On one such trip to George Houston's farm, I got permission to load up and was invited to share a breakfast of steak. Jim Stone was also there, and a grand plan was conceived of the three of us going to China. The idea was that in China, the white business men would see that we got jobs in case they lost face. George Houston was the only one to start that journey, and he got rolled for his money in California, and wound up as a motorcycle cop in Los Angeles. Jim Stone travelled a long road with the Canadian Army, and had a distinguished career.

That was life in the 1930's — Hard Work, no money, and dreams.

Relief Work

At one time the Government decided to give everyone a chance to earn a few dollars. They decided to cut the bush on the highway allowance from west of Spirit River to Cache One. Each person was allowed 10 days work at 25¢ per hour — a 10 hour day and board yourself. Gangs were hired in relays, and the work was in fairly heavy spruce and poplar. We worked near Bill Rankin's stopping place. Men cut the trees and limbed them. Teams of horses dragged the logs into piles, and later on the stumps were blasted and pulled by horses. Marshall Testowich had a fine stump pulling team. Today this is a fine paved highway.

U. of A. Extension Course

In winter the University of Alberta held several Youth Training Schools in Spirit River, which I attended. It was there I met instructor Jack Kearns. Jack later became District Agriculturalist for Ponoka, and often visited us in our farm home. On one occasion I was cutting grain and Connie invited Jack to stay for supper. I was surprised to see Jack when I came home for supper, and he proudly announced he had just milked the cow, so I had no chores to do. I gazed in surprise at about two quarts of milk; usually the pail was almost full. Jack saw my look and asked "anything wrong?" "No" I replied, "but I'm glad you decided to be a D.A. and not a farmer."

The C. R. S. Keyser Family by Florence Giles

The Keyser family came from Strathclair, Manitoba to the Peace River country in the spring of 1929, settling on land about seven miles west of Whitburn Post Office. The land turned out to be so badly burned white that it wouldn't grow anything. If it



Roy, Irene and Marvin Keyser.

hadn't been for the cattle providing lots of good milk, butter, and homemade cheese; and lot of hard work, there would have gone hungry a lot of people in that country. The cattle were free to roam for miles (the peavine was delicious), and miles and miles had to be walked usually, by the women to bring them home for milking. What frightening experiences must have been encountered when bears were everywhere, and with them being the unpredictable animals they are — but through it all, does anyone recall an attack by a bear?

When the Keyzers arrived in the early fall of 1929 their 'home' was a tent. When a four foot snowfall came, travel by horseback was almost impossible. Prior to the snowfall in September, our Dad, C. R. S. Keyser and Hugh Miller were digging by hand and windlass, a well, to try to get drinking water. Some 40 feet down, gas was encountered which snuffed out the lantern. Hugh was brought up nauseated with a strange headache, but at this time, gas was not thought of. Dad went down and was nearly overcome — was brought up and taken to Grande Prairie, which at that time was approximately 75-80 miles away, for medical attention. He was a long time convalescing in the tent which took its toll on our poor mother's life. However, God has been good to

mother, and gave her strength to always carry on in spite of many adversities. Today she still lives quite independently in Aurora Court at Grande Prairie, past her 96th birthday in September 1980. She is in reasonably good health for all her hard work and willing helping hand to all who came her way. Our dad passed away in February 1943.

The family consisted of four — two boys and two girls. Roy, Florence, Thelma and Joe.

Royal Everett (Roy) was born 1908. Has farmed all of his life. He married Irene Potratz in 1940 and they had one son Marvin Royal Charles born in 1948. He in turn married Larraine White in 1972 and they have one son Darrin Royal, born in 1975. They live at Airdrie, Alta.

Florence Keyser was born in 1913, and in 1934 married Robert Lee Giles. They had two children Robert Lundy born in 1935 and Gail Alberta born in 1938. **Lundy** married Muriel Aide in 1961 and they had two children — Sharon Loree born in 1961, and Kurt Lundy born in 1963. They moved to Los Angeles in 1964 where they have their home and are U.S. citizens. **Gail** married Harold Raphael Lewis in 1955 and they live at St. Albert, Alberta. They have three children: Beverley Gail who married Darrell McLeod in 1980, Susan Tenney who married Peter Duda in 1978, and Lindsay Lionel born in 1960 and lives at home. Beverley lives in Edmonton, and Susan in Coquitlam, B.C.

Thelma Keyser married Robert Duncan Menzies in 1938 and they had four children — Douglas Robert born in 1939, Beryl Margaret Gail born in 1950, Larry Dale born in 1944, and Linda Marie born in 1948. Douglas married Theresa Hakes in 1965 and they have two children, James Robert born in 1966, and Brenda May born in 1969. They live in Spirit River.

Beryl married Ralph McDonald in 1972 and they have two children, Corey Leighanne born in 1975 and Colin Robert Ward born in 1977. They live at Rocky Mountain House, Alta.

Larry Dale is not married and lives on the farm at Gordondale.

Linda Marie is not married and lives in Grande Prairie.

Joseph Maxwell Keyser was born in 1917. He married Florence Robertson in 1951 and they farmed in the Spirit River area before moving to Westlock. They had a family of four, one boy and three girls; Ronnie, Heather, Kathy, and Joanne.

Ronnie married Wanda Gadzke in 1980.

Heather works at Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie.

Kathy works in a bank at Westlock and lives at home.

Joanne attends school at Westlock and lives at home.

The John Kozuback Family

Just after 1900 John Kozuback came to Canada from Austria and was married to his wife Katherine, also from Austria. They settled in Cudworth, Saskatchewan, where all of their children were born.

In 1929 John and Katherine came to the Peace River Country with their family of thirteen children. They first lived in Spirit River for a year, and then for two years southwest of Rycroft, then for two more years north of Rycroft. In 1934 they homesteaded in the Whitburn district. By then some of the older children were out on their own. Steve was in Grande Prairie. Mary had married and also lived in Grande Prairie. Anne was in Vancouver, and Matt and Mike were working out. Bill and Nick took up homesteads in the Whitburn area, and later Pearl went to work in Edmonton. Still at home were Peter, Maybelle, Alex, Elsie, and John Jr. The family all joined in community life and took part in the social activities of the



Mr. and Mrs. John Kozuback.



Kozuback Family, also Bill and Mary Solomiany.

Blueberry, Whitburn, Gordondale, and Ksituan districts.

Mr. and Mrs. Kozuback lived on the farm until Mr. Kozuback's death in 1948. Later Mrs. Kozuback moved to Spirit River, and lived there until her passing in 1963. The other members of the family gradually went their separate ways, and none are now residing on the old homestead. Matt, the eldest son is living in Dawson Creek. Mary, who was Mrs. Cliff Anderson, passed away in Grande Prairie in 1977. Nick lives in Peterborough, Ontario. Bill of Kelowna, and Mike of Penticton, are living with their wives in retirement. Maybelle, Mrs. Lush, lives in Port Coquitlam, B.C., and Elsie with her husband Harvey Boyer and family live in Prince George. Pearl is Mrs. Alex Stevenson and lives in Edmonton. Anne, Mrs. Bill Stott, lives in California. Alex and his wife live in Bentley, Alberta. After many years in his own business and operating cats in the Arctic, Peter now lives in Spirit River. Steve and his wife



Pete, John and Alex.

Ruth also live in Spirit River, and John and wife Dora live in Rycroft. There are several of the third and fourth generations also in Spirit River and Rycroft.

Bill Lindsay

I was born in Neepawa, Manitoba on January 18, 1897 to James Stewart Lindsay and Minnie Mae (Scott). As a young boy I moved with my family to Grandview, Man., where we stayed for about three or four years. Because of wind, dust storms and poor farming, my family decided to move again, this time to Radisson, Saskatchewan. Things were better there, and soon I got my own farm, and I met a nice little lady, Elsie Klee. Her parents were farming in Radisson also. We were married March 25, 1925.

My uncle Bob Scott and his family, and my brother Tom had taken up homesteads in the Peace River Country, and, always looking for greener pastures and better opportunities, Elsie and I decided to make the move also. In 1928, I chose a homestead in the Whitburn area and took squatters rights. We took off our crop that fall in Saskatchewan, and started to get things together to move west.

On March 10, 1929, Tom and I arrived in Spirit River, by freight train, with the machinery, 5 head of horses, 4 cows, a wagon, and a heart full of energy. It was the end of the railroad and snowing heavily. I got permission from Dan Vader to put my stock in his Livery Barn for the night. The next morning it was still snowing, heavier than ever, so we made a deal. He, Dan could have the milk and cream from the cows and there would be no charge for the stable. Having a wagon at this time was no good, so Tom and



Jim Lindsay Sr. and Grandson Jim.

I went out to Walt Muellers and borrowed a sleigh. Three days had gone by, and finally we were on our way to the homestead. We crossed corduroy bridges and hit very bad roads, arriving at Tom's place some six days later. Work began quickly, as Elsie and Tom's wife Martha were coming in two weeks time.

With the help of neighbours, Uncle Bob Scott and his sons, also Tom and I, we set out to get logs for our house and barn. Elsie and Martha arrived, and as our house wasn't ready to live in, we stayed at Tom's place. The house was of logs, and the cracks were filled with peat moss and other materials, and we moved in June 10th.

Elsie was expecting our first child in July, and as doctors were quite inaccessible in those days, I took her to town earlier. A few days later I drove back to check on her condition, and Elsie decided she wanted to come home, which she did. That evening, and after the long ride home, things started to happen. Lawson Scott was sent to Spirit River on horseback to inform Dr. Reavely, and found him stuck on the corduroy bridge on Cache One with this '28 Chev. car coming this way. At home here, everyone was wondering what the hold up was, so Ted Scott was sent with the team and buggy to find out what had happened to the doctor. Tom was sent with another team and buggy to Blueberry Mountain to bring Mrs. Penny who was a very qualified midwife. Upon her arrival, and with the help of Aunt Mae and Mrs. Cramer our son Jim was born July 10, 1929. Dr. Reavely did arrive but about sixteen hours too late.

That year I did some more clearing of land, but in the spring of 1930 we went to work for Mr. Huston in Blueberry Mtn. Elsie cooked for the men and had the duties of milking the cows. We stayed there until we had a chance to rent the Steve Keay place, 2½ miles east of the old Blueberry store which was owned by Nick Badiuk at that time.

Elsie was awaiting the birth of our second child. She was staying with Aunt Mae again, but as Scotts had moved to Garnet Lake in the Spirit River area, she was closer to a doctor. On March 28, 1934 a daughter Shirley was born, this time in the presence of Dr. Reavely.

While in Blueberry, with all their community spirit, we all gathered together and got out logs to build a hall. Once the hall was up, dances were held quite regularly. Summer picnics were a big crowd catcher, with ball games, races of all sorts for young and old the name of the day. The women used to stay up nights making homemade ice cream — the treat to all. We used to have our own orchestra — Tom was on the fiddle, and I played the piano, then others started to fill in. The two Jamison brothers, Sid and

Albert played — one the saxophone, and the other the accordion.

I believe I was the only one in Blueberry to have a registered Percheron Stallion; Eclipse was his name. Farmers used to come for miles around to our place for the services, and sometimes I would travel with him to the farms around, as horses were definitely needed. Also, this was a way of making a little money, or trading for one thing or another.

While on the Keay place we built a new house in 38/39, quite a difference from the log ones. I built an ice house that year also. It made a good cooler for the cream we shipped and for the butter Elsie made. That year our third child, a daughter Madge was born, June 18, 1938.

I used to take a load of wheat over to Sexsmith and get it ground up for flour. The trip used to take about four or five days, but it was worth the effort. Having about ten sacks of flour around, we knew we wouldn't go hungry. I used to trade flour for sugar or whatever on the way home. In the winters I used to haul grain to Spirit River for myself and others, the balance of my time was spent working at Sedore's Saw Mill, later called Spinney's.

On January 24, 1942 our fourth child, Wesley was born, then on May 30, 1944 another son Robert, followed on July 24, 1945 by Sharon our youngest.

As our lease was up on the Keay place and I had to prove up on my homestead, we moved back to Whitburn. The old house by this time was not habitable, so we rented Jack Taylor's place and built a good sized bunkhouse for the men to sleep in. My dad built us a good sized table, a 4' x 8' sheet of masonite covering up some of those good logs we sawed into lumber. He made good sturdy legs on it, and built a bench 8 feet long to slip behind it. It sat the six kids for quite a while. He also built a big cupboard which is still on the farm today. It has had many a different coat of paint that one.

We worked on clearing and breaking some more land that year on our own farm. Because there was no school at Whitburn, that winter was spent getting out logs for our new house on the homestead, and the community effort of getting logs for the school. I believe the school opened in September 1947, with seven students, and then as families moved in for the winter work at the Sawmill at Moonshine Lake (now the Provincial Park), two more boys, Leslie and George White joined the classes. The first teacher was Miss Lena Letersky I believe, if my memory doesn't fail me. Mrs. Thomlinson Sr. also taught school there, along with a few supervisors teaching correspondence. The community also built a teacherage near the school, so the teachers had a place to stay. Shirley helped the younger members of the

family with correspondence in our own home before the school was built. She wrote her Grade IX Departmentals at Blueberry Creek School. Jim finished school while we were still in Blueberry. Shirley went on to High School in Spirit River.

We finally did get moved into our new home on the homestead to stay on April 3rd, 1950. We had a big house warming party on March 25th, at it was our 25th Anniversary. Around forty-five people attending and we were dancing through the kitchen-living room partitions. Orrin Hudson brought out a fiddler that night by the name of Emil Leduc. Was he ever good! He could play that fiddle in many a position, and even play the old hand saw.

Soon things began to happen. Jim left for the summer months with the Ellison boys from Duncan, B.C. (formerly from Blueberry) to look for his venture in life. Shirley was working at the Co-op store in Spirit. That fall Shirley married Don Hudson, and in February Jim married Helen Hoover.

Shirley and Don have four children: Donna (Mrs. Gordon Skoworodko) of Blueberry Mtn., who has three daughters Kimberly, Shelley, and Lori Lee. Ken and Karen (Watt) have three — Jennifer, Kevin and Loel of Prince George, B.C.

Kelly and Karen Hudson at home in Spirit River.

Jim and Helen Lindsay have seven children: David and Sandra (Davison) of Grand Prairie; Sharlene of Edmonton, Ronnie, Brent, Craig, Denelle, and Carla at home.

In September of '53 the Whitburn School closed and the students were bussed to Spirit River. I then moved the bunk house to Don and Shirley's, south of town, and the four younger ones went to school in Spirit River from there. Later on we bought a lot in town and moved the little house down town and built on to it.

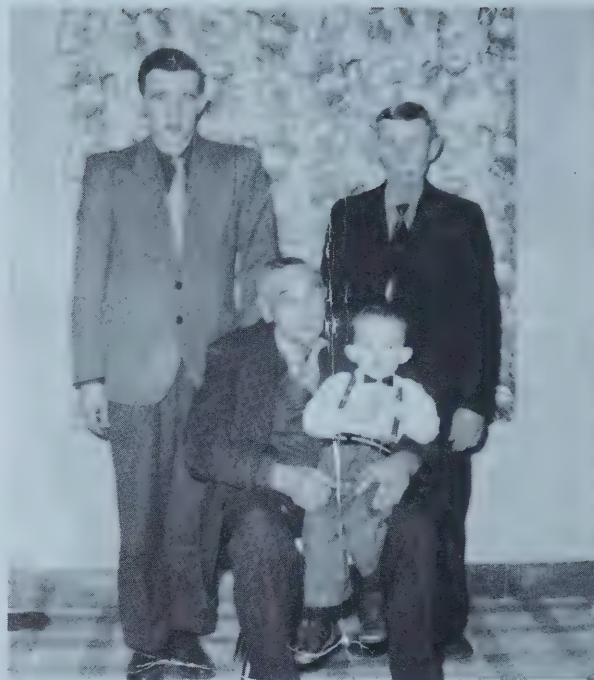
Elsie just loved to go to all the hockey games. I'm sure if she could have had wings she would have flown to every Ranger game that was ever played. She used to cook at Pleasant View Lodge and the Hospital, but it never tired her to go to a hockey game at night.

In January Madge married Cam Traplin. They have three children — Lori (Mrs. Ross Roberts), Marshall and wife Diane, and Melanie at home — all of Chetwynd, B.C. Lori and Ross have two children, Samantha and Brandon.

Wes and Pat (Eckart) were married July 10/64 in Lumby, B.C., now living in Manning, Alta. They have two sons, Carey and Shane at home.

Bob married Eileen (Duby, of Wanham) April 30/65 and they have two sons Warren and Shawn at home in Spirit River.

Sharon, the youngest married Gordon Potratz



Four Generations: J. Lindsay Sr., Bill Lindsay, J. Lindsay Jr., and son Dave.

May 14/65. They have three children at home — Wally, Roxanne, and Wesley. They live on the homestead.

My wife Elsie passed away suddenly on March 10/65, but through all the trials and tribulations and toils we shared, the love and the memories will never be forgotten.

I retired from farming in 1967 and live in my little blue shack as I call it, on the east side of town, and just celebrated my 84th birthday with a bang.

Ramblings of Tom Lindsay as recorded by Karyn Bryson

"I've certainly had a good time in the Peace River Country, and have made a lot of good friends," was the beginning of an interview by Karyn Bryson.

Tom Lindsay was born in Neepawa, Manitoba in 1899, but moved to Radisson, Saskatchewan with his parents two years later. At the age of 29 he decided to leave his family in Radisson and come to the Peace Country as he "figured there was corn in Egypt here", and he would fare better with crops. His parents were first generation Canadians and his grandparents were from Scotland and Ireland.

Tom and his brother Bill arrived at Whitburn in 1928, with Bob Scott, Jack Taylor, Henry Bauman, James Beaumont, Ed Porterfield, Jack Porterfield, and Cecil Neil. First they built a granary that would serve as a cookshack and a place to sleep. Tom was



Grandma Lindsay.



Wanda.

elected to cook for the crew and sat up till 2 a.m. cooking biscuits the night the granary was finished, till he could find a spot to lie down. It was -10° F outside and had started to snow but, "there we were, too many of us". Next morning we jumped on saddle horses and all went to Spirit River, in two feet of snow.

Tom went back to Radisson and married his girlfriend Martha Lerch, a German girl he had been too bashful to propose to before going north. Tom had played the fiddle for Martha's dad at all the dances around Radisson and even won a fiddler's contest at Maymont.

Brother Bill had gone back to Radisson for his wife Elsie Klee and his stock, so they brought back two freight cars of horses, cattle, and machinery to Spirit River. Said Tom "I had \$5 left when we got here and brother Bill had about the same".

We unloaded and walked the stock and dragged the machinery to Whitburn, over horrible roads and falling-apart bridges. The horses were nervous, and crowded as the bridge at Cache One swayed when we crossed. "My horses went across there like scared rabbits".

Old Michelle Testawich, an Indian, ran a stopping place there, but we still had to get through Gunshot Creek and Ksituan Creek, and on to Whitburn. It was a 23 mile trip and took a long, long day, so the cow had to be milked before we got to our destination.

Martha and Tom cleared 30 acres the next two years at their homestead which was two miles north of what is now Highway 49. They would chop down trees from 7:00 p.m., till midnite, after he came home from working at Blueberry. They would also pile and burn in the evenings and he paid John Cramer \$9 an acre to break what was cleared. They had no feed for their stock, so Tom would haul wheat straw (which cost \$1.00 a load) from Blueberry. That was a full days trip, and they tried to stockpile as often as possible, in case of blizzards.

They were so hard up that they would hoard their tea leaves in case a visitor or the minister came by. They drank milk or water just in case. Tom says that minister, Rev. Boothroyd was a good guy. "He would play baseball with us all until it was time to start a service, and then finish the game afterwards".

"After those first years, everything in my life has come easy by comparison, except maybe our first daughter Wanda. When she was born in 1930 we couldn't get a doctor. We got Mrs. Penny, a regis-

tered nurse from Blueberry, and Mrs. Charlie Cramer, a midwife, assisted her”.

Tom went to work for Roly Hoggarth at Blueberry when he was still homesteading at Whitburn. He put in Hoggarth's crop for him and got 25 bushels of oats a day, worth 8¢ a bushel, for payment. He worked from 6 a.m. till 5 p.m. each day with root harrows and eight head of horses — till one day he decided it wasn't worthwhile and quit.

Soon Tom realized Martha was losing weight and decided he had to get her out of there. He gave up the homestead and got a job plowing with a tractor for George Huston, and moved his wife and daughter to Hustons in Blueberry (now Bob Hampton's place).

He plowed for Huston till November 11/31 in bitter cold weather. Huston and Dewey Bateman came with a car and told him to shut down, and come and run off some moonshine for the Armistice Day Dance being held in the log hall, one mile north of Blueberry store. Tom and some helpers worked from 6 p.m.-6 a.m. running off 13 gallons. Tom says his helpers are all dead now, “and they didn't make it through that night either. Five of them were lying five across the bed by 9 p.m.” He says he was the only one who didn't succumb to taking a nip, but the smell of the stuff during the time they were running it off had already made him sick.

Martha didn't know about all this as she was at home. Tom returned about 7 a.m., kissed her hello and headed for the fields. When he got to his tractor it wouldn't start as it was frozen up. He lit straw and thawed the machine, then continued plowing till November 15, when the ground got frozen too hard. They lived at Hustons and worked for him for two years.

For the next 10 years they rented Tom Gillespie's farm where they built a house, barn, chicken house, and ice house. This farm was located 1¼ miles north of the present Community Hall and Mrs. Bird's old store.

Their second daughter, Evelda came along in 1933, but this time Martha stayed in Spirit River “because I was too scared for her”. She stayed at Herman Dibble's — a mile out of town — but at least Dr. Reavley was there to help this time.

Their two girls started school in the one-room school at Blueberry Mountain, and they were luckier than most as they were within walking distance. Sometimes Tom would have to walk Evelda back to school as she would play hookey and come home to see her Mom and Dad. “She was a homebody sort”.

“We had a hell of a good time during those 10 years”. Tom would make his own beer for their own parties. Martha knew about that but kept things under control by keeping everyone well fed.



Tom and girls.

One day someone gave Martha a runty pig, and she let it become a pet. It would climb the steps and squeal for milk. Martha would feed it and bed it down to sleep on her old coat in the washtub. It wouldn't stay with the others pigs until Tom thought to put the coat in the pen with them. The runt was satisfied to sleep there, but no other pigs were allowed near the coat, or the fight was on. They got a lot of lard out of that one.

Tom and Harry French painted the Blueberry School white and the shingles green in the blistering heat of summer. “It was so hot that the paint boiled on the brushes, and Harry French was like a bleeding beet”. Tom also helped build the Blueberry Hall. He says he filed saws, carpentered, hammered, and stayed with it till the hall was finished, as did many others.

He played his fiddle all alone for the opening night dance. Even Spirit River folks came out for that one. “There was a lovely crowd, the hall was full, and there wasn't one disturbance. It was the cleanest dance I ever played for, and they danced their legs off”. He started playing at 6:30 p.m., and quit about 6 a.m., with a lunch break at midnite. There was not one to spell him off, so he says, “No one can accuse me of hugging up anyone else's woman that night”.

One real cold night Dan Galbraith came to haul Tom off to play his fiddle at Whitburn. Dan came with a four horse sleigh, but the snow came down heavy all night and they only made it to Bill Bortz's on the way home before the lead team played out. Dan had to go to his place to get replacements.

"Everyone had a hell of a good time, so it was worth the trouble". Often during later years Tom's fiddling services were required at Whitburn, Gordondale, Blueberry, Yellow Creek, or Spirit River.

1932-42 were prosperous years for Tom. One year he got \$5100 for his share on the rented ½ section, and the owner, Tom Gillespie, got enough to go home to England for a visit. The price of wheat was \$1.36 a bushel, and because the land was newly broken, he claims they got close to 50 bushels an acre. He made 51 trips to town hauling his and his neighbors crops that winter. He hauled with two buckskin horses — an excellent team called Buck and Jerry. He had another bigger team of Clydes, but they could never keep up to the buckskins.

One winter day Tom got a letter from brother Bill who was back visiting in Radisson and needed some money. Tom decided to drive down to Bill's granaries and load up some of his wheat for him. He froze his nose shovelling it out, and afterwards the horses would only go fifty yards before stopping. Tom went up to their heads to see what was wrong and discovered their noses were bleeding from the cold. He left the load at Dan Galbraiths and walked home behind the horses. It was -72° F., and stayed cold like that for two weeks before he finally took the load to Spirit River when it warmed up to -55° F. He sent brother Bill a money order from the Post Office with a note telling Bill where to put his money. "In those 10 years everyone worked like the very devil. Fun times were few and far between. The kids were young and needed to grow".

Herbie Keebler came along in the spring of '42 and told Tom about a place for sale at White Mountain, 5 miles south of Spirit River. Tom thought he

would like his very own place, so bought the ½ section with 140 acres cleared for \$7000. They tried to farm it, but nothing would grow because of the dry weather. One year Tom cut only 4 baskets of bundles off 45 acres, and the grain was only 1½ feet high. They carried on because they needed feed for their stock. He was paying interest on that land so he had to do something. In 1944 he rented a ½ section from Don Pring, and luckily seeded it to Fescue, which paid 41¢ a pound that fall. Tom took \$5500 for his share and was able to proudly pay off his White Mountain land.

Tom worked his land through the '40's and '50's planting mainly barley, oats and wheat. "Martha worked like a buddy through those years and was always making a sweater or mittens for less fortunate children". They got hailed out, burned out, and dried out, but carried on. "We were able to live and had lots to eat as we had our own pigs and cattle, but sometimes our clothes got a little shabby". In 1945 the war ended. Tom didn't fight overseas because of bad eyesight, but fought hard labour at home like many others, to supply the country with food.

Wanda and Evelda went to school at White Mountain, and Wanda's teacher Connie McDougall boarded with them. In 1946 when Wanda was in Grade 10 at Spirit River High School and was only 16 years old, she came down with tonsillitis. She had a local operation, but her kidneys were weak and infected. She took convulsions and died ten days later. Dr. Law was a wonderful doctor and a great source of compassion at this terrible time. He would come out to the farm just to talk and comfort the Lindsays. He and his wife (the former Alice Dion) would come to visit in the evenings. In later years Dr. Law continued to visit but also to hunt ducks and prairie chickens.

About 1960 Martha came down with cancer. She had an operation, but the disease spread. She continued to do chores until confined to the house. One day as Tom was "holding her in my arms, she just



Tom Lindsay.



White Mountain Farm.

stopped breathing and had no pulse. I knew she was dead. God! she was a good woman". That was February 8/63.

Daughter Evelda and husband Bob Ptolemy moved out to the farm immediately. Tom eventually moved to his mother's house in Spirit River in 1965. He has developed cataracts and is confined to town unless someone picks him up — which happens often. He now spends as many days as possible travelling to local farms to castrate pigs, lift potatoes, grind horseradish, butcher chickens, or hunt wild game. He has even been seen driving grain trucks at harvest time if there are no authorities around to stop him.

He has worked hard all his life and enjoyed it. He now has three grandchildren, thanks to Bud and Evelda Ptolemy:

- Karen Johnson of Grande Prairie
- Graig Ptolemy of Spirit River
- Randy Ptolemy of Rycroft

He also has four great-grandchildren:

- Shelley and Charlene Johnson
- Chad and Shalynn Ptolemy

At 81 years of age he more than earns any of the meals he receives on his forays around the country.

The Parlee Family History

by Pauline Parlee

Michael was born in Grande Prairie on January 17, 1941. His father was a minister, a teacher, and also farmed in the Westvale area, by Wanham. Michael's father Robert, taught school in Ksituan in 1945 and 1946. His wage was \$90 per month. In those days, the Solomiany's walked 5 miles to school, and the Sopkows walked 7 miles. The area was mostly bush, and wolves would sometimes follow the kids at a distance as they walked to and from school. The Parlees lived in a teacherage next to the school. Michael's father passed away in 1967. His mother, Edith, lives in Sexsmith. Bob and Norma Parlee live in Grande Prairie, and have three children, Diane, Gordon, and Brenda. Jonathon (Jock) and Anne Parlee live in Grande Prairie and have two children, Troy and Lisa. Miriam (nee Parlee) and Ken Hauff live in Edmonton and have one boy, Kevin.

I, Pauline, was born in Sexsmith, and went to school in Canuck School, and then Sexsmith School. I took Nurses Training at U.A.H. in Edmonton between 1965-68. In 1965, we acquired E½ 14-79-9-W6. Our first glimpse of our future home came in August '65 when we headed west of Spirit River over dust clogged Highway 49 to look at our land. Michael already had a D7 cat, and a breaking plow which he had purchased a year or so earlier. We met the Ben Loewen's on this first trip.



Breaking in 1978 with 18A-D9.

In 1966 we acquired SW 24, and a year or so later, W½ 14, as homestead land. Michael and Ben Loewen became partners and started clearing the land with the D7. Michael worked for A.G.T. in Edmonton while I finished Nurses training. We were married in August '68, after which I acquired a diploma in Public Health Nursing from U. of A. Edmonton. In May '69, we moved to Grande Prairie so we could be closer to our land. I got a job as Public Health Nurse with the Grande Prairie office of the Health Unit, and Michael transferred to Grande Prairie with A.G.T.

In 1970 the Blueberry Mountain Nursing Service closed, so I transferred to Rycroft sub-office of the Health Unit. I spent 2 days with Alma Ferrier, being orientated to my new area of Blueberry, Silver Valley, and Gordondale. (I also covered Spirit River and



Shane and Juanita in yard, 1976.

Working). Miss Ferrier was a real pioneer nurse who knew everyone in her area. In the earlier years she often had to be dentist and vet as well as nurse, when the roads were much poorer than now. She was honored as Nurse of the Year by the A.A.R.N. that year. I spent a good bit of the summer months exploring my new territory and becoming acquainted with the people in my new area. My work included pre-natal teaching, hospital visiting of mothers with new babies, baby immunization clinics, school visiting, visiting the handicapped and any who were old or lonely. I think I received as much as I gave during these visits, whether recipes, or fresh vegetables, or tips about all sorts of topics.

When we moved from Grande Prairie we bought a trailer and moved it into Ben Loewen's yard. In November 1971, we moved it to SE-14-79-9-W6. Shane was born in 1972, and Juanita in 1974. Michael bought a D8 cat, and we continued to clear our land, and had approximately 600 acres broken. However, due to flooding problems — low land and very wet weather, rather than undertaking an expensive drainage project, the government bought the land back in exchange for six quarters of homestead land in the former Poplar Ridge area, west of Rex Carpenters'. In 1978, we acquired a further two quarters by assignment from Leon Lucas. To date, we have 1100 acres under cultivation on the new land; 160 of breaking. We plan to move to our new land in '81.

Michael quit working for A.G.T. in 1971, and went into custom land clearing. He bought a D9-18A. In 1978 he bought a D9-66A, and uses these two cats to do custom land clearing and to give R.



Mr. and Mrs. Ben Loewen by D.7.



Mike Parlee Family.

Angus a healthy sum for repairs. I quit working as Health Nurse in 1976 to be a full time mother.

In conclusion, my mother always warned me to never marry a farmer, and a homesteader would be one step lower, but we wouldn't trade the freedom and accomplishment of making a new farm from scratch, for anything.

The Robert Scott Family by Margaret (Scott) Thomas

In April of 1928, seven carloads moved into what was called "The Burn". The seven carloads of settlers effects came from Grandview, Gilbert Plains, and Dauphin, and the owners were:

Robert C. Scott — Tom Lindsay from Radisson, Sask.

Jack Taylor — Bill Lindsay from Radisson, Sask.

Henry Bauman — Ed. Porterfield from Dauphin.

Ted Scott — Jack Porterfield from Dauphin.

James Beaumont — Cecil Neil

who came to settle in northern Alberta. As there were



Tents for first dwelling.



Bob Scott log house.

no buildings, the first thing they did was to build a granary with lumber that Bob Scott brought. This granary was used as a Cook House and a place to sleep.

Tom Lindsay was elected to cook for the crew of men. Horses were bedded under spruce trees until the men all got logs and built a fairly good sized barn which was quite close to the granary. Next they built a log house, size 26'x36'. It had a cottage roof and was shingled with shingles Bob Scott brought in with the settlers effects from Manitoba. He also brought the lumber and one door for the house and two windows.

The men all came north first, and two weeks later Mrs. Scott, Minnie, Margaret, Bob and Cameron Scott came by train. We stayed at Steve Keay's Immigration Hall in Spirit River, where we bached for a few days, as we had come on the wrong train, and there were no telephones or other means of communication to let the men know of our arrival. Mr. Scott and Jack Taylor came to Spirit River with two teams of horses and two wagons. We left town at 7 o'clock a.m., as it was a long rough road ahead, and we reached Cache One around noon. After eating the lunch we had taken along and feeding the horses, off we went again to face a large sign on the Railroad Bridge over the Cache One Creek, "Dangerous — Cross at Your Own Risk". The bridge was 75' high with no sides on it. The horses were as nervous as we all were, putting their noses down to smell before they stepped. No one spoke till we got across, as Dad warned us not to panic as the horses were really cautious. An undescribable journey took us through high slash and corduroy, mud and water — no sunshine that day.

We finally reached the big Ksituan Creek with steep hills like you hadn't seen for years. Jack's team played out, so we left his wagon there and led his team behind Dad's to our house at Whiteburn, and arrived at supper time. Did any kind of a home look good to all of us?

Between Jack and Dad they had brought 10 milk



Lindsays and Scotts.

cows, 2 pigs and some hens from Manitoba. We had no feed but the grass, and peavine was plentiful. We let the pigs out each morning after milking time and they were fed skim milk and browsed and fed on grass etc. They always came home at night to their four wall log pig pen to get their milk. We had a gang around, helping each other build claim shacks on their land, and mother churned butter every few days. She made a deal with Mrs. Mildrum at Blueberry Mtn., to sell butter at the Post Office. Mr. and Mrs. Mildrum were so kind and helpful, and welcomed every newcomer. We got our mail at Blueberry till we got our own Post Office, named Whitburn. Mrs. Mildrum sent many armfuls of lovely rhubarb down till we got our own started.

Lawson Scott came north in June to claim a quarter of land then went to Edmonton in August and married Maplet Buchann, known to all of us as Mickey. She became the Whitburn Post Mistress from their home, and carried on in that job for thirty-eight years till the country Post Offices closed and the Rural Route was started.

More and more people came in from Manitoba and settled. Dibbles, Cramers, Tiny Crowder, John Finlayson, Thomlinsons, Billy Glenn, Dave Miller, Wayne Shampelrain, Ike Nellis, Keysers, and many more. Times were hard, money was scarce, but we soon had church service every Sunday morning. A student minister, Mr. Boothroyd preached at Blueberry, then at Whitburn, and on to Gordondale each Sunday. When the young couples started raising families, Mrs. Penny from Blueberry came and attended the confinement. Mrs. Scott Sr., and Mrs. Cramer Sr. assisted Mrs. Penny, until a Health Nurse came to Blueberry and lived there in a small home. Those Health Nurses also saw hardships, without the con-

venience of running water and electricity, and they had long cold drives in open sleighs etc. in cold winter weather.

Wild fruits, such as raspberries, wild strawberries, cranberries, goose berries, and black currants were plentiful, and each family worked very hard to fill every empty jar. Moose were plentiful, and I think the good Lord looked after us all, as someone would always shoot a moose or a deer when the last piece of meat was gone.

By fall, Pring's sawmill started up, which gave the settlers employment for the winter. Wages were not big, but everyone was eager to get a few dollars. The men then got together in a year or so and got out logs which were sawed for lumber. They got together on several Work Bees and up went a real good community hall, where they had good dances, picnics, and many good times.

One time Dad cut the hay around Moonshine Lake and put up seven stacks. Someone went in to pick black currants around the lake and started a fire for tea, but they didn't put the fire out and it spread and burned the seven haystacks. A large fire started and burned many acres of beautiful timber. Vic Mitchell, the fire ranger, came down with a few extra men to help fight fire, and we got completely closed in with fire. Jack Taylor and Dad each brought up a steel Rumely tractor and they were the means of saving our buildings. Mickey helped my mother prepare meals for all the crew, and Minnie and I went to Moonshine Lake to help fill water bags on the horses backs, as our brothers and Dad were helping fight fire. When the Ranger sent in the time sheet to the government the men's cheques were sent, but they

wanted an explanation as to why two girls were fighting fire. He promptly wrote back and told them he had our parent's permission, and also said that the girls had worked harder than some of the men. It really was a challenge to make a few dollars, but they promptly sent our cheques.

I'll never forget the fire. Lawson hitched up a team and wagon, and he and I took barrels, crocks, cream cans, and what not to some beaver dam, to bring water to the house before the fire got between the dam and the buildings. He galloped the team there and back, and handed me pails of water up to the wagon. We just got to the buildings when the fire passed by.

Thinking back, I think everyone was lonesome for Manitoba; telephones, good roads, etc, but the pioneer spirit of sharing and the happy times we look back upon, seems to erase the hardships we had. To see the beauty of the whole Peace River country today, has been worth every moment of the pioneer's struggle.

The Lawson Scott Family by Mae Howell

Lawson and Maplet Buchan (better known as Mickey) were married in Edmonton, August 15, 1928. They came to Whitburn and lived with Lawson's folks until their own log house was built. Their first child, a boy, was born June 7, 1929, but due to lack of medical care, the baby lived only a few hours, and Mickey herself nearly didn't recover. Although the doctor advised against having more children, Mae was born in Grande Prairie Hospital, and Norma was born at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie



The Bob Scott Family.



Lawson with Pelts.

Cramer. Mrs. Cramer assisted Nurse Munroe with the delivery.

Jobs were almost non-existent, and money 'as scarce as hens teeth!' Lawson had trapped in Manitoba so he again trapped every winter. He and Jack Barnett trapped the Jim Beattie line at Hudson Hope in the winter of 1931-32. At this time there were no registered trap lines, so Lawson went to the Peace River on the north, west to the Pouce Coupe River, and south to the railroad grade. He built eight cabins to stop at, while covering the line. At first he travelled by snowshoes, and later mostly by horse and toboggan, making up to twenty miles some days.

In 1937 Pete Kozuback came to trap with Lawson in the winter. They worked together until February 1945. Pete then went to work for Spinney's Mill. At this time they had over a dozen timber wolves. Of these, Lawson picked nine top pelts and took them to the Hudson Bay fur buyer in Grande Prairie. For their efforts they received \$6.00 per pelt.

During the summers from 1941 to 1950 Lawson worked on the government road maintainer and covered the territory from Grande Prairie to Dunvegan and Watino, and east of Rycroft to the B.C. boundary.

Lawson was an ardent worker for Moonshine Lake, which was started in 1959. At this time ten promoters put up \$100 each, and two-dollar tickets were sold to the local people to raise money for the project. \$1,384 was raised, and Lawson Scott was elected to take the money, hire a cat., and oversee the work of forming a lake. He was Park Warden for nine years, and was instrumental in making the ball diamond at the park

Mickey always held the home front together. From tethering her milk cow for seventeen years, she kept quite a swath of field clear of brush so the old cow wouldn't get tangled up. She was also Postmistress for the thirty-eight years prior to the coming of Rural Route mail delivery. There was no

school, so Mickey taught the girls correspondence. She took Mae through grade six, and "was the toughest teacher I ever had, but whatever she taught, I never forgot".

Grampa and Grandma Scott moved out to Garnet Lake, but never sold the homestead (SE 20-79-8-W6) until 1947. At that time Pete Kozuback bought it, planning to build a home and live there. In 1952 Pete decided to go into the Cat. business, so he sold the land to Mrs. Clarke Vanderford, who in 1965 sold it back to Mae. "Having Grampa's original homestead is just like going home".

Lawson and Mickey had taken up homesteads on the NW 21-79-8-W6, and NE 20-79-8-W6. Lawson had John Cramer build a new home on the NW 21 in 1948, and although they have now sold their farm to Harry and Mae they continue to live in their own home. Lawson and Harry still trap the remaining area of Lawson's old trap line.

Mae went to High School in Spirit River, and it was here that she began her career as a telephone operator. She and Florence Purvis worked for the telephone agent, Mrs. Alice Blackie. In January 1949 Mae went to work for A.G.T. in Grande Prairie. On December 1, 1951 she married Harry Howell who worked for the Canadian Utilities Power Co. They were stationed at Rycroft till they were moved to Fort St. John in November 1952.

Harry took up a homestead, E ½-18-79-8-W6 in 1957, then went to work on the Mid Canada Radar



Lawson and Pack Dog.



Lawson and Mickey — 50th wedding anniversary.

line. Mae and their three children, Edward, Gordon, and Bonnie came to live with her folks for the two years Harry was away. They moved to their homestead in August of 1959. Two more girls, Marianne and Kathy joined the family. These five children all graduated from Spirit River High School.

Edward spent three years in the Airforce and then married a former friend from grade school, Patricia Hickox, at Chilliwack. Pat and Edward live in Fairview and have two sons, Trevor and Ryan.

Gordon inherited the SW 29-79-8-W6 from Jack Taylor. He built a large log home just east of Jack's old homesite. In July 1980 he married Brenda Shrafnagle of Silver Valley.

Bonnie works in Grande Prairie. Marianne is in her second year of nurses training at the Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton.

Kathy is in first year accounting at Grande Prairie College.

Norma, Lawson and Mickey's second daughter went to Valleyview to work in the Co-op Store. She married Benny Gordon in December 1955. They have three girls; Cindy, Karen, and Carol. These girls all graduated from Valleyview High School.

Cindy is now a teacher. Karen is an accountant, and Carol is in University in Edmonton.

A Tribute to Lawson Scott The Pioneer

He hung his shirt on a fence post
and took the lines in his hands,
with his eyes on the far horizon
he started to plow the land.

And the sun beat down on his shoulders
and the oxen blazed in the heat,
he joyed in the job he was doing
and the furrow at his feet.

He whistled a tune at sunrise
as he strode from his shanty door,
and he whispered a prayer in the evening
as he threw his boots on the floor.

Then he slept and he dreamed of the future
as the moon rose full and clear,
and the Lord sent down his blessings
to the home of this pioneer.

Where is this man that I write of
for the fields are ripe today,
with the wheat of a million acres
that stretch to the west away.

Swaying under the noon breeze
shimmering under the sun,
standing as a golden symbol
to the toil of that stalwart one.

And into the endless distance
where the castles of grain arise,
the haze of the prairie harvest
hangs on the autumn skies.

And the roar of a thousand combines
reaping from year to year,
Bring a comforting note of triumph
to the home of the pioneer.

Where is this man of the moldboard
who planted the seed of old,
that has drifted across the prairie
until it covered the plains with gold.

Now a modern home on the highway,
on the spot where his shanty stood,
is a symbol to all that follow
that the way of the west was good.

Yonder he stands in the sunset
watching now from the hill,
seeing his sons and grandsons
take up the plow to till.

With memories blurring his vision
that was once so true and clear,
and this land that had lured and loved him
and made him a pioneer.

Yonder he stands on the hill top
watching out over the plain,
seeing somehow in that sunset
the trail of the buffalo again.

Crossing and re-crossing the grassland
to disappear in the haze,
it hangs like a dusty curtain
on the stage of those early days.

Feeling the expectations that
coursed in his veins of old,
as the first sod of the prairies
from the point of his plow share rolled.

He knows as he stands there watching
that the trials of yesteryear,
were really the greatest triumph
in the life of the pioneer.

Yonder he stands in the sunset
but he knows as he walks alone,
the trail of the prairie buffalo
has blazed the way of his own.

For the rut of his homestead wagon
once cut in the open plain,
has been swallowed up by the furrow
and will never be seen again.

He knows that the mark of his coming
will fade as the years go by,
with no more trace than this sunset
will leave in the western sky.

And his dreams of his team and binder
and his stook rows turned by his sweat,
will disappear in the twilight
and soon we will forget.

Will there be others like him
who will follow up on the quest,
with the power to witch the wheat lands
that lie in the far northwest?

Will there be men so willing
to step from the trodden way,
to open the land as he did
back in those early days?

Will the thrill of the old adventure
just die as the prairie wool,
leaving a listless legion
with a cup that is over full?

Oh, how we are going to miss him
when we come to the day at last,
when we are no longer going to sit and listen
to his memories of the days past.

For he lived through a grand adventure
that few of us will know again,
and his life has been carved by that plow share
on the face of that western plain.

And though the name may be missed
to those who can read between the lines,
it is a story of strength and striving
and it is a tale that is true and fine.

For it tells of the wide horizon
and the distances vast and blue,
and it tells of the old homesteader
and the job he had to do.

It tells of his trials and triumph
and now as the end appears,
yonder he stands in the sunset
the last of the pioneers.

Author Unknown

Solomiany, John

John Solomiany was born at Harasymium, Ukraine in 1877, and came to Canada on his own in 1899, homesteading at Cudworth, Saskatchewan. He travelled 31 miles on foot to the land office in Ros-thern to file on his homestead.

His wife, Mary Sabadash was born in the West-ern Ukraine in 1885. She came to Canada with her parents in 1896 and married John Solomiany in 1900.

Their family of eight — 4 boys and 4 girls were all born at Cudworth. Three members of the family died there. In 1929 John sold out, and he and the Kozuback family moved to Spirit River, Alberta. The Solomianys stayed south of Spirit River the first year,



Mr. and Mrs. J. Diakiw.



John and Mary Solomiany on their bridge at Whitburn.

then homesteaded at Whitburn and moved there in 1930.

Matt and Bernice Solomiany came north with their parents. Matt homesteaded in Blueberry Mtn., and later sold his land to Jack Richards. He then moved on to his Dad's land in Whitburn. In 1955 he sold that land to Verne Galbraith and moved away. He married in 1957 and now lives in Calgary.

Bernice went to work in Edmonton. She married George Worsulak and they had one daughter Patsy. George died December 10/67, and Patsy died at 23



Leaving Saskatchewan for Spirit River.

years of age in 1975. Bernice lives alone in Edmonton.

Fred stayed behind at Cudworth to finish his High School, then came to Spirit River in 1934. He married Jean Sandul of Rycroft, bought a farm in Rycroft and they raised a family of three — one girl and two boys; Frances, Dean and Allan.

Annie came to Spirit River with her brother Bill and his wife Mary in 1931. She married Matt Hrychan and they lived in East Blueberry. They had two daughters: Ruth and Mary.

Bill married Mary Diakiw in Cudworth in 1930 and they moved to Spirit River in 1931. Bill homesteaded beside his dad's land in Whitburn and built a house there. He and Mary had three daughters: Elsie, Anne, and Nettie.

When Elsie was old enough to go to school, there was no school at Whitburn, so she lived with her aunt Annie Hrychan and attended school at Ksituan for two years. She then lived with her uncle Matt for one year and attended Blueberry Creek School. By that time Anne was ready to start school, so the two girls drove a horse and buggy from home to Ksituan School, a distance of five miles. Nettie also started school at Ksituan and travelled by horse and buggy for her first year. By this time, 1946, Whitburn School was built, so the girls transferred there, but still had to drive three miles to school. Elsie and Anne finished Grade IX at Whitburn, but Nettie lived with Elsie (who is now Mrs. Gordey) in Spirit River and took her Grade IX there. Elsie married George Gordey July 2/52 and lived in Spirit River. They had a family of five: 2 sons and 3 daughters, who all attended Spirit River School. Elsie and George moved to Manning in 1978. Their daughter Sally now lives in Vancouver; Gary lives in Edmonton; Marlene lives in Grande Prairie, and the twins Larry and Laurie live at home in Manning.

Anne married Ed. Farquist June 1/55 and they moved to Valleyview. They had two children: Wayne and Brenda. Wayne married Diane Cody and they



Leaving for home after Easter Visit.

live on the farm at Whitmud Creek. They have two children, a boy Neil, and a girl Janet.

Brenda is in school at Valleyview and lives at home with her parents.

Nettie Solomiany was married Jan. 11/57 to John Raskauskas and they had a family of seven. Debbie, the oldest, is now married to Kelvin Edmunds and they have two girls. Tammie lives in Calgary; Robert is working at the Iron Works and lives at home; Johnny is clerking in a store in Calgary and lives at home; Danny died when he was three years old; Cheryl works in a music store in Calgary and lives at home; Patricia attends school and lives at home. Nettie remarried in 1977, and is now Mrs. Ian Bennie.

A History of the Solomiany Family

The roots of the Solomiany family start in the western Ukraine in the village of Harasymium, the home of both Bill's father and Mary's grandfather. Bill's father John was born in 1877 and emigrated to Canada in 1899, homesteading in Cudworth, Sask. To file on his homestead in those days he had to walk the 31 miles to Rosthern. His wife Mary Sabadash was born in the western Ukraine in 1885 and came to Canada with her parents in 1896. John and Mary were married in 1900 and had 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls all of whom were born in Cudworth, Sask. Three of the children died, Peter at birth, Lena at 1½ from the Flu, and Irene at 28. The remainder of the children are Bill of Spirit River, Fred of Rycroft, Matt of Calgary, Bernice of Edmonton and Anne of Spirit River.

Bill's wife, Mary's family, were also from the village of Harasymium in western Ukrainia which at the time of their leaving was a part of the Austria Hungarian Empire. Mary's grandfather Bill Diakiw was born in 1859 and married Palahna Solomiany (no relation of Bill's) who was born in 1862. Their family of three boys and one girl were born in the Ukraine. The family moved to Canada arriving in Halifax on



Bill and Fred Solomiany, and Paul Hrychan.

Nov. 8/1902 and then travelled west to Homestead in the Cudworth, Sask. area near the Solomiany homestead. All three sons were born deaf and dumb. The daughter Katie married John Kozuback. The third son, Mary's father married Tikina Shimiginski Nov. 6, 1912 in Cudworth, Sask. John and Tikina had 9 children 3 boys and 6 girls of which 1 boy and 5 girls are still alive, brothers Mike and Steve and sister Anne being dead. Bill Diakiw still lives in Cudworth, Mary Solomiany of Spirit River, Molly Hallischuck of Calgary, Kay Hallischuck of Manitoba, Pearl Backowsky of Toronto, and Olga Leduc of California all survive in good health. John Diakiw died in 1974 and Tikina Diakiw died in 1980.

Bill and Mary Solomiany were married in Cudworth Sask. on Nov. 1, 1930 and moved to the Peace River country on Oct. 23, 1931. They have 3 children, Elsie Gordey of Manning, Alta., Anne Farnquist of Valleyview, Alta. and Nettie Bennie of Calgary, Alta. Elsie and George Gordey have 5 children, Sally of Vancouver, Gary of Edmonton, Marlene of Grande Prairie, Larry of Ft. St. John, and Laurie of Manning. Anne and Ed Farnquist have 2 children Wayne and Brenda. Wayne married Diane Cody and lives in the Whitemud Creek area with their 2 children Neil and Janet. Nettie and Ian Bennie have 6 children from her previous marriage to John Raskauskas, Debra the oldest child is married to Calvin Edmunds and they have 2 children Kelly and Christine. Tammy lives in Calgary, John lives in Calgary, Robert lives in Valleyview, Cheryl lives in Calgary, and Patricia still lives at home with Ian and Nettie.

Bill's father John Solomiany came to the Spirit River area with the Kozuback family in 1929 and stayed his first year south of Spirit River before buying his homestead at Whitburn. Bill's brother



Bill and Mary Solomiany.

Matt and sister Bernice came with their parents while Bill and Mary brought sister Anne the following year and brother Fred came in 1934 after finishing his schooling in Cudworth.

Matt Solomany first homesteaded at Blueberry Mountain and later sold his farm to Jack Richards. He then moved to his fathers farm at Whitburn which he sold in 1955 and moved to Ft. St. John and then to Calgary where he now lives with his wife Adeline in happy retirement tending their flowers and garden and taking an active role in his church.

Bernice Solomiany moved to Edmonton to work and there she met and married George Worsulak. They had one child, daughter Patsy who died at the age of 27 in 1975. George Worsulak died on 10 Dec. 1967. Bernice still lives in Edmonton.

Fred Solomiany came to Spirit River on 4 Jan. 1934 after finishing school in Cudworth, Sask. He married Jean Sandul of Rycroft and they bought a farm northeast of there where they still live. Fred and Jean have three children, daughter Frances and boys Dean and Allan.

Anne Solomiany came to Spirit River with Bill and Mary in 1931 and lived with her parents until her marriage to Matt Hrychan. Matt and Anne farmed in Ksituan until their retirement when they moved to Spirit River and are now Bill and Mary's next door neighbors. They have 2 children Ruth Laskey of Edmonton and Mary Dwernychuk of Spirit River.

The coming to the Peace River country proved to be a period of much hard work and considerable hardship for the entire family though now all who were involved can look back at these times and remember the laughter at the unusual occurrences and now can see that the hardships made for a better and more meaningful life in later years. Bill can still remember his arrival in Spirit River on Oct. 23, 1931,

he came as a settler riding in Box cars all the way from Cudworth. His first night he stayed with his Uncle John Kozuback in Rycroft and then traveled out to his fathers homestead in Whitburn the following day in a Model T Ford, driving along the railroad right of way as there were not yet roads in this country, only trails. He recalls later trips along this same route with a team of horses having to blindfold the horses when crossing the railroad bridges so that the animals would not panic and jump off the bridge.

Bill's Father John Solomiany and uncle John Kozuback had preceded him and his wife to this area so on his arrival he stayed with his father until he moved to his own homestead. The day after his arrival at the farm Bill returned to Spirit River for another load of their possessions and the rest of the family. On the way back to the homestead Mary's brother killed 37 Partridges so quite a celebration was held that night at the old farm. According to Bill and Mary's accounts their original home on his fathers homestead was not exactly our modern concept of comfortable living, it had two rooms with only small windows, a dirt floor and the beds were made of slats. After staying for a year in these rather spartan surroundings Bill built a house of his own and then walked the 70 miles to Grande Prairie to file on a homestead of his own. As he now recalls this episode, out of their savings of \$28 he took with him \$10 to purchase the homesteads and 45 cents spending money. After filing on homesteads for both himself and Mary he walked back home and prepared to move the house he had built onto his own land, a task that was finally achieved in 1933.

The first year on the land Bill cleared 11 acres of bush and as he states "it was nothing but black stumps and ashes but strawberries and raspberries grew well along the edges". To prove the homesteads Bill had to clear 30 acres of his land and 80 acres of Mary's after which they received clear title to the land and their taxes became \$4.50 a year. Bill with the help of Mary and her sister Kay managed to pile and burn the bush, pick roots and rocks so he could sow his first crop of wheat. This first crop allowed

him to buy some machinery, an old combine, one cow, and one horse. At this time if he wanted any more help he would have to go and borrow his fathers team of horses. There was at this time no water on the farm so whenever water was needed a walk of over a mile was made to the creek to bring it home in lard pails. With water being so hard to get it was treated with great respect, as an example when you washed your dishes you saved the water so it could be used for washing hands after which it was used for watering the garden and plants. Eventually a spring was found nearer the house and this saved considerable walking until a dugout could be excavated.

To make a little extra money Bill went to work. In 1933 he started running a tractor for Don Moore doing this for 3 years and making enough money from his pay of one dollar a day to buy a little more machinery for his own farm. In later years he held other jobs while Mary and later the girls worked the farm. He worked summer months for the Dept. of Public Works fixing culverts and other jobs as needed. He also in 1942 worked in Ft. St. John for 3 months but quit his job to go back home and work the farm.

In 1960 Bill and 10 other men from the area helped create Moonshine Lake and developed the park around it. Bill worked at the park until his retirement in 1974. The lake and park have become a part of the provincial parks system and are a very popular part of the Peace River country.



B. Solomiany Farm.



Four Generations.



Solomiany Group, 1980.

Bill and Mary sold their farm and moved to Spirit River on March 3, 1974 and still live there in happy retirement. On July 5, 1980 their three girls and their families organized a Golden Wedding celebration for them in the Spirit River Centennial Hall and it turned into probably the best reunion this large family has ever had. Relatives and friends from all parts of western Canada and even Holland joined the couple for almost four days of celebrating and eating, meeting old friends and even meeting cousins never be-



B. Solomiany Family.

fore seen. This celebration brings up to date a small part of the history of this family and though much more could be written and many more anecdotes quoted time and lack of the proper information do not allow it, so for now I will end this writing.

Ian and Nettie Bennie and Family, Calgary



Fiftieth Anniversary.

Diakiw, Sam (Mary's grandfather) was born 1859. His wife Palahna Solomiany (no relation of Bill's) was born in the Ukraine in 1862. Their family of three boys and one girl were all born there. They came to Canada, arriving in Halifax November 8, 1902. All three boys were deaf and dumb. The one girl Katie, later married John Kozuback. Sam Diakiw was loved by his family and his grandchildren. He died at Cudworth, Saskatchewan in 1933. His wife died in 1943 at the ripe old age of 83.

John Diakiw, (Mary's father) the third child, was born January 20, 1888 in the village of Harasimium in the Ukraine (at that time under Austria-Hungary). He came to Canada with the family in 1902.

Tikina Shimiginski (Mary's mother) was born in the village of Harasimium in 1891 and came to Canada, October 14, 1912. She married John Diakiw three weeks later, Nov. 6, 1912 in Cudworth. They had a family of nine — 3 boys and 6 girls. Two boys and one girl died. John died in 1964. Tikina remarried and is now Mrs. Hnat Zacharchuk and lives in Winnipeg.

Mary was the oldest of the family and she married Bill Solomiany at Cudworth in 1930. Her mother and dad came from Cudworth to visit them at Whitburn at Easter in 1947, and had to travel six hours by team and wagon in the mud, back to Spirit River to take the train home.

Jack Taylor

Jack Taylor came to Canada from Devon, England in 1923, and settled first at Grandview, Manitoba. In 1928 he came to Whitburn (known as The Burn) with the Bob Scott family.

As Jack was a veteran of World War I he was entitled to homestead a half section of land, so he took the SW 29-79-8-W.6 for his home place, and the NE 19-79-8-W.6 for his second quarter. For many years Jack had the only threshing machine in the area, and spent a lot of time away threshing in the falls. For several falls he hired Pete Kozuback to do his fall work while he was away.

During his youth Jack was an accomplished soccer player, very quick on his feet and capable of commanding the play in the game. He enjoyed sing songs, card games, and social gatherings. He was an obliging neighbor and friend to all in the community. When Mae and Norma Scott got their sheep, it was Jack who taught Mae to shear and care for them, as he had been used to tending sheep in England.

When Mae and Harry Howell moved to their farm, Jack delighted in the 4-H activities and school work of their children. The "new math" was an utter disaster and "one hang mess" as far as Jack was concerned.



Jack Taylor and Grace Cramer.

Misfortune came to him several times. A frisky horse "Nancy" that he rode, fell on him. His right foot was crushed when a truck load of cattle backed over it while attempting to make the hill at the Ksitan Creek. In the fall of 1956 he fell and dislocated his shoulder. Then in the early spring of 1957 his John Deere D tractor caught fire and was damaged. He then rented his farm. In the fall of 1959 he came to live with Harry and Mae Howell, and lived with them until he returned to England in 1969 to visit his brother. While he was in England he died in May 1969, and was buried in the family plot there.

Thomlinson, Earle Gordon

Earle Gordon Thomlinson was born at the family farm at Kenton, Manitoba in 1884. He had two sisters, Eva and Reba. His father, Robert was born in Ontario, and his mother Margaret Bond was born in Ireland. She died when Reba was born, and the family was raised by their father.

Earle married Clara Langton in 1911 in Manitoba. Clara was born on the shores of Lake Winnipegosis. Her father was born in England, and her mother,



Building Crew: Bob Scott Sr., Jack Taylor, Earle Thomlinson, Ike Nellis, Graeme T., Lawson Scott, Unc. Cramer and John Cramer.

Margaret Graeme McGeorge was born in Scotland. Clara was teaching school in Lenore, Manitoba when she met Earle. They had one son Robert Graeme, born at the same family farm as his father had been.

Earle came to Spirit River in the spring of 1928 looking for land, and chose the homestead at Whitburn. He returned to Kenton that summer and harvested, then came back north and spent the winter getting out logs for a barn. In the summer of 1929, he went back to Kenton and loaded up household effects, 6 horses, 2 cows, 2 calves, and a Model T Ford one-ton truck, and returned to the homestead in November with his wife and son Graeme. The Model T was later traded for a binder.

They spent their first winter in a 12' x 16' log shack, complete with double bed, single bed, cookstove, large leather chair, table and kitchen chairs. The piano spent the winter outdoors in its crate. Also that first winter they got out logs for a house, and with the help of the neighbors built a log house 32' x 26' in 1930.

Their nearest neighbor was Bill Lindsay who lived a quarter of a mile away. Other neighbors and residents of Whitburn were: J. Finlayson, Bob Scott Family who homesteaded in Whitburn in 1928, Lawson and Mickey Scott who were married in 1928, Tom Lindsay who was the renowned fiddle player for dances in the community, Tom Foulston, Ernie Orr, Ike Nellis, Charlie Cramer, J. Cramer (known as Unc.), H. Crowder (known as Tiny), Herman Dibble, J. Kozuback, J. Solomiany, Mrs. Jamison and family (Tom, Sid, Albert, and Walter, who came in 1930), C. Drzewicki, Charlie Keyser, and Cecil Ash who was the mailman, hauling mail from Whitburn to Gordondale.

Earle also planted some crop in 1930 but there was a heavy snowstorm in May, and June was a terribly wet month, so the crop was flooded out. he



Earle, Clara and Grandsons.

returned to Manitoba, hoping to make enough money threshing to bring his tractor and threshing machine north, but being the first year of the depression, the farmers had no money, so he spent his time stooking and helping thresh on other outfits. Graeme meanwhile, went stooking for Andy Ellison in Blueberry at \$1.50 a day.

The next number of years were colored by the depression, which was made worse by the rather unproductive soil of the area. The Thomlinsons, like many others, survived by renting land in Blueberry Mtn. or Spirit River, by going harvesting in the fall, and freighting grain to the elevators for the more established farmers. The majority of the original Whitburn Settlers left in 1930 to find work, and they never returned, so the settlement was quite scattered.



G. Thomlinson Family.

The social life consisted of house parties and dances in the neighborhood community halls, and these were enjoyed by all members of the family. The very little ones slept on benches or makeshift bunks while the older members danced or played cards. Baseball and soccer were summer entertainment with the highlights being the community picnics where homemade ice cream was the order of the day.

In 1939 Thomlinsons seeded the first alfalfa in the district. This was the turning point in the Whitburn fortunes, as seed production was very profitable for about 15 years. This started Graeme into the production of pedigreed seed.

In 1942, after living through the dirty '30's, Clara went back to teaching school. She taught at Gordondale, Whitburn, Stony Plain, and Rocky Mountain House.

In 1944, after making enough money from the first good money crop of alfalfa, Earle went back to Manitoba and shipped the tractor and threshing machine north. He arrived back in Spirit River the middle of July, and he and Graeme spent a month rebuilding the threshing machine which had deteriorated from exposure to the elements. This served the family and the community well for several years.

In 1949 the first combine was purchased, a small clipper, which is still functioning. The next year a small Ford tractor, and a new pickup truck, and mechanization was on its way.

Clara Thomlinson died in 1961 — funeral Oct. 31, 1961.

Earle Thomlinson died in 1962 — funeral Oct. 31, 1962

Both were buried in Gordondale Cemetery.

Graeme was an only child. He married Marion Graham in 1947 and they have lived on the farm at Whitburn ever since; Graeme growing registered seed for which he received recognition as a Robertson Associate in 1957. He has always been active as a Co-operator. Served on the Co-op. Board, on the Credit Union, on the School Board, and has been active in politics and in the Presbyterian Church, of which he is an elder.

There were good years and bad, with the good years dependent as always, on the weather. For several years in the '60's there were good crops, but the weather in fall made harvesting impossible. In 1967 Marion went back to work, as secretary of Spirit River School. She moved to the new school when it opened in 1970, and altogether worked for eight years as school secretary.

Graeme and Marion have two sons, Brian and Neil, who took all their schooling in Spirit River, travelling close to forty miles each day by school bus. As teen-agers they were both active in the Blueberry Creek 4-H Beef Club, and Neil did well in Public Speaking. Brian, now 1980, a salesman at Windsor Ford in Grande Prairie, married Evelyn Longmate in 1974 and they now have Christina born 1977, and Robbie born 1978. Neil is not married, and is Parts Manager at Village Ford in Berwyn and lives there.

Community Projects

District Nursing

by Wilma Bird

The Public Health Nurse's Act became operative on May 17, 1919, and, among other clauses, allowed nurses to practise under the auspices of the Province of Alberta, where the services of a registered medical practitioner were not available. When a district nursing area was organized, application was made to the Minister of Health, by the community concerned. When that application was accepted, an organization meeting was held, and at least five representatives were elected from various parts of the district, to act as a Nurse's Home Committee. This committee was responsible for arranging a house, consisting of office, waiting room, and living quarters for the nurse. Furnishings, maintenance and an adequate supply of fuel and water were also their responsibility. Medical supplies and equipment were provided by the government at cost, and the nurse's salary was also provided by the government.



Miss Leppington, First District Nurse.

Small fees were charged for the nurse's services. A fee of \$1.00 was charged for the first home visit, in case of illness, with no charge for subsequent visits. For maternity cases, the charge was \$10.00 and that included all pre-natal and post-natal visits. Office call charges were fifty cents for the first visit, and that covered any follow-up. Medicines and supplies were provided at cost. Where families were unable to pay, the services were provided free.

When a home visit was required, the family was responsible for the transportation. In the earliest days this was largely by wagon or democrat, or, more often perhaps, an extra saddle horse. This graduated to Model T's, little grey Ford tractors, and then more sophisticated vehicles as the road systems permitted. It all called for a fairly hardy nurse anyway, and the more athletic the better!

District nurses who served at Blueberry were:

Miss Millicent Leppington — Jan. '35

Miss Janet Munroe — June '35

Miss Marie Swan — May 1936

Miss Elizabeth Sage — January 1937

Miss Margery Dunstan — July 1939

Miss Elizabeth Wallwork — October 1940

Miss Hazel Dearing — August 1943

Miss Florence Harrison — January 1945

Mrs. Nina Renwick — September 1946

Miss Marjorie Mitchell — December 1948

Miss O. Mynard — July 4 to 28, 1951

Miss Edna Carveth — July to Oct. 1951

Miss Sarah MacIntyre — November 1951

Mrs. Wilma Gunn — August 1952

Mrs. Wilma Bird — May 1953

Miss Ursula Wiessback — October 1953

Miss Dorothy Vinge — September 1954

Miss Dorothy Gavigan — September 1955

Miss Bell Howitt — October 1955

Miss Doreen Bastable — May 1957

Miss Alma Ferrier — October 1958

In the book "These Were Our Yesterdays", Janet (Munroe) Reynolds records: (June 1935)

"Before going to Blueberry Mountain, I was told



Second Nurse's Home.



Marjorie Mitchell, District Nurse.

to go to Smith district for a short orientation. There I met Miss Leppington who was on her way out from Blueberry to be married.

After I got off the N.A.R. train at Spirit River, I enquired if any person from Blueberry was in Spirit River. I was able to get a ride with "Unc" Cramer. We left at 1:00 p.m., riding in his wagon, and arrived at his home at 9:00 p.m.

Next morning I met Mr. McCormick, Chairman of the Nurse's Committee and owner of the one and only store. He took me to the nurse's home which at that time was a granary in a pasture, a short distance from the store. There was no gate, so one crawled under the barbed wire fence. There was one door, and a window on each side had been built into the walls . . . Inside there was linoleum on the floor, one strip of blue building paper from ceiling to floor, and the remainder of the walls were bare. There was a homemade 15" square table, one homemade bench, one old Morris chair, and the smallest stove I had ever seen . . . One corner was partitioned off, and behind was a bed and an orange crate for a dressing table.

There was no well. A structure had been built of logs and ice was packed in it, in sawdust. No door had been cut in the logs, so one could not walk into the building to get the ice. There was no roof so one dug their toes between the logs, climbed the side of the building, hacked a small piece of ice from a big piece, dropped it to the ground, climbed down and picked up the broken pieces. This was my only source of water.

Mail was picked up and received once a week. Three weeks after I arrived, the mailman started for Spirit River. When he got to one of the deep ravines through which we had travelled on our way into Blueberry Mountain, he found that due to the almost daily rainfall, the creek had become a roaring torrent. The bridge had been washed away and it was impossible to ford the stream.

For three weeks we were completely isolated, because there was no phone in the area. During that time the storekeeper's pre-school daughter had an attack of appendicitis. A man had a badly infected hand. A woman living 15 miles from the nurse's home sent for me because she had a miscarriage. Fortunately, they all recovered."

Elizabeth Cram, nee Sage, records in the same book:

"Blueberry Mountain, the first district I served, in 1937, was a vastly different place from what it is today. To reach it you left the end of steel at Spirit River, roughly 300 miles northwest of Edmonton, and then west 25 miles over a road, which at times, was virtually impassable. During wet seasons it was a vast stretch of gumbo, and anyone foolish enough to tackle it by car had to spend much of his time digging the clay out of the wheels it had clogged tight. One time it took me 12 hours to go the 25 miles.

The nearest dentist was at Grande Prairie. That was unfortunate, because I often felt what the people in my district needed most was a dentist, or a veterinarian. Extracting teeth was one of the hardest things I had to do. As a result, I avoided pulling teeth whenever I could. However, once when the road was impassible during a blizzard, the local storekeeper had a terrible toothache, and I simply had to extract the tooth. When I had finished I offered him some brandy I reserved for such occasions. He took one look at the brandy, another at me, and said "You take it Miss — You need it more than I do."

This extremely interesting district had originally been settled by returned men from the First World War, complete with English brides. I think most of them were trying to get as far as possible from civilization, with little idea of what they were getting into."

Hazel Dearing Paish also records some of her nursing experiences in her history, elsewhere in this book, as does Marjorie Mitchell Thiessen.

The preceding makes my advent (Wilma Bird's) seem fairly tame, though seen from today's perspective it would seem tumultuous enough. I arrived in August of 1952 in my little old 1947 Chev. car, and ran into some of the muddy conditions registered before. There was a road by then from Spirit River to Blueberry, and six miles out of Spirit River was even gravelled. It had been raining then too, but no one had warned me, and not knowing any better, I proceeded on out from Spirit, rather amazed at conditions, but driving right along. When I got to Blueberry it was to considerable surprise at this end, as nobody else had made the trip for a week! That was my initiation.

Affairs at the nurse's home were much better by then however, and it could be made quite comfortable and cheery by that day's standards. It did still involve stoking a kitchen stove, cleaning out ash pans, melting snow for all purposes in the winter, trips to an outdoor biffy, doing the washing on a board, ironing with sad irons, etc., etc. There was still a coal oil lamp, which had some advantage over the gas one — it made a flaming hurried exit from the house on at least one occasion. There was also an oil stove which got up and danced around the living room every once in a while. I was more fortunate than some other nurses in that, having grown up on a farm on the prairies, such episodes were not that uncommon to me, and were therefore a little less frightening. All of this was just ordinary living, sandwiched in between what I'd been sent in to do — district nursing. It made for a full day, especially as I had a young daughter to raise on the side.



Last Nurse's Home.

Since I had my own vehicle, and there were few around then, many people assumed it was for community use and it certainly was used to that end, especially if there was any medical aspect to the trips. It was a really good old car, and thumped along frozen trails and muddy ruts better than any nowadays would do. Every so often the air cleaner (which at that time was a considerable part of the bulk of its innards) would fall off, and I would hop out, raise the hood and reinstall it, thereby impressing (hopefully) my passengers with my mechanical expertise. It would start at -38 degrees F below zero, with the aid of a gas stove inserted under the hood. It carried me into, and always out of, many spots very foreign to me, who had always been more or less a "prairie chicken."

The road down to a lumber mill south and west, never failed to impress me with the grand old trees, sometimes silhouetted against stars and deep blue skies, sometimes standing out of high white snow banks. The road to Gordondale was often just a treacherous trail, but the tall spruce trees leaning almost over it, made every trip a memorable experience. There were also trips to Wonderland when one "wondered" how to get out again!

Of course there were other experiences . . . a baby born under incredibly unsanitary circumstances, and turning out perfectly okay (causing me to remember a supervisor's comment from the past — "just remember this has been going on for a long time, and don't panic.") . . . my first suturing job on Dorothy Paish who had fallen on a combine. . . Pneumonias, burns, heart attacks, ulcers, arthritis - you name it. My patients probably never realized how much prayer went into their recovery, but they did recover. Dr. Law was always very good to me whenever I had to take patients in to him, and I could phone on the one phone which was at the store across the way . . . Then there were the school examinations of the pupils, and immunizing them against disease, done on a regular basis. (There was Blueberry Mountain, Blueberry Creek, Yellow Creek, Ksituan, and DeVale Schools in those days, later centralized to Blueberry Creek;) as well as Gordondale. Other nurses followed me after I finished in November 1953, but people came to me for years at times when there was no nurse, or when the one who was resident at the time was away.

A new nurse's home replaced my cheery cottage in 1957. It was a larger place on a full basement, with electricity and running water and sewer, and was really quite magnificent compared to what we old-timers had survived, but always looked less "homey" to me.

Miss Ferrier arrived in October of 1958 and be-



Churning — Pioneer Style.

came a legend in the years up to 1970, when she retired, and the nursing service at Blueberry Mtn. was discontinued. She had originally come from Scotland but had nursed for several years in Aden and Tanganyika before coming to Canada. She brought many extra talents with her, one of which was that of instructing piano lessons. The year before she left, she was named “Nurse of the Year” by the Alberta Registered Nurses’ Association, in the light of her many years of nursing service both here and elsewhere, thus shedding a little more glow on her own stamping ground — Blueberry Mountain.

The Junior Forest Wardens

In 1963 the Silver Valley Community Club decided to sponsor a Junior Forest Warden Club for boys aged 10 and over. The birth of this new idea became the Silver Valley Blackhawks — the club’s own special name.

In 1964 the Silver Valley Nightingales began; the first Girl Guard club of its kind in Alberta! Finally, after running side by side for years, both groups merged and formed a Co-ed club in 1976.

The main objective of the club is well stated in the motto “Keep Our Forest Green”, and the pledge: As one who believes in the aims of the Junior Forest Wardens, “I pledge myself and my services to work for the wise use of our natural heritage; woods, water, wildlife and soils”.

Most of the member’s time is used trying to get to know our natural heritage better, by overnight camp-outs, hikes, picking cones for the Forestry, attending summer camps, participating in “Clean up Alberta” highways and so on.

There have been unforgettable times spent at Moonshine Lake Prov. Park, for the First Aid and Red Cross Swimming lessons. In the past, headquarters sent two guards to Vancouver to attend the British Columbia Summer Camp at Evans Lake. One of our Wardens has gone on the Alberta Resource tour. A number took part in the Lethbridge exchange trip in 1974, and countless members have attended trail rides, Easter Leadership, training and summer camps, (separate and co-ed) to increase their skills as Junior Forest Wardens.

In 1978, those attending the summer camp-out met and spoke with Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip.

George Brewster, Chief Warden of Alberta, and Keith Langille, Regional Supervisor, visit Silver Valley occasionally to present awards, show slides, or give members the badges they have earned. Gold pins of honor have been given to members of the Adult Council for long service, and ‘Thanks’ to parents who help to keep the spirit going.

Fourth Creek Community by Marilyn Haugland

Our community is quite young compared to a lot of the areas represented in this book. The first settlers arrived here in the early ’50’s, all of them acquiring homestead land and seeking adventure and a better way of life. There were many struggles to make a go of it, although our conditions were not as severe as the real early Peace country homesteaders. Through all the trials of pioneering in this new land we have had a great community spirit, which is an asset to any area. There was always a helping hand when one needed it.



Road to Fourth Creek.

Our Ladies Club has played a big role in our community. It all started Dec. 14, 1960, when seven ladies met for the first meeting at the home of Flossie Haugland (Hindmarch). The membership has grown a lot since then. We have monthly meetings with each member taking their turn as hostess in their homes. We have held an annual turkey dinner for a number of years with a sale of crafts the ladies make. The proceeds from all these things go back into the community for such things as hall furnishings and repairs and also some for charity. Our meetings are very informal, taking care of the needs of the community, and then visiting and having coffee together. It has been a great way to keep in touch with our neighbors.

Fourth Creek also has a Community Association which started even earlier than the ladies club. Meetings of this group were held in the old school until a hall was built. This Association has always sponsored our annual picnic and have had many good dances etc. We acquired a 20 acre lease for a hall in 1959. Work was done clearing the site and getting the grounds ready to build, logs were taken out and sawed by the men in 1961-62.

Finally our dreams came true and construction started in the fall of 1963. All of the labor was donated. George Hewson was the foreman and received some work back from the community for the long hours he worked. Since then many changes have taken place and our community facility has grown. In late 1974 we built a kitchen onto the Hall and an adjoining curling rink with the viewing area from the kitchen. This curling rink has provided many hours of good entertainment for young and old.

1978 brought forth another improvement, when we were able to install an artificial ice plant with help

from a government grant. This greatly improved the curling conditions. This winter, 1980, we built a new entry way, over a basement and finally got our indoor plumbing facilities and also improved our heating.

Our grounds also have a ball diamond and have



Curling Rink under Construction Fourth Creek.



Creek Banks.



Bear Creek.

posts in for our gymkhana grounds. We've been many years getting our recreation centre to where we want it. Many people have donated endless hours of work. There is no end to what a community can do if everyone pulls together and works like some in Fourth Creek Community have done. We hope the ones to come after us will keep it up and make this an even better community to live in.

Blueberry Mtn. Community Hall and Goodwill Society.

The Blueberry Mountain Community Hall was built in 1938, approximately 1¼ miles north of its present location. From that time until 1949 it was run by the shareholders who had received their shares either by donating labour or cash. In 1948 or 49, Ken Mitchell sawed the hall in half, and moved it down to its present location. Shortly after the move, the operation of the hall was taken over by the Blueberry Mtn. Community Recreational Association. In the fall of 1949 Jack Bird's store burned down, and the hall served as a store for a short time until he could rebuild.

In April 1939 the ladies of the community held a meeting at the home of Mrs. Corbett, to form the Goodwill Club. Mrs. Penny was elected the first president. Then, as now, the main function of the club was to provide or sponsor community activities. The club also supported the Red Cross, C.N.I.B., and various other charitable organizations. During the war years, packages were sent to the men who were overseas from the club, and a library service was also operated with some donated books. The wheel chair that has been in the hall, was purchased for the community by the club, and the first person to make use of it was Mrs. Tyler Sr.

At some point in time, the Goodwill Club also

assumed the responsibility for care and maintenance of the cemetery, and in 1959 they also took on the operation of the hall. In August of 1962 the club became a registered society — The Blueberry Mountain Goodwill Society.

In 1977 Bill Fald from Fourth Creek was hired to frame in an 18 ft. addition to the south side of the hall. Since that time, through donated labour, the plumbing and finishing work in the new part and some renovations on the old part have been carried out. At this time, (March 1981), the end is in sight, so that hopefully the inside work will be completed in the near future. Siding on the outside, and landscaping of the grounds are the two major projects left.

In 1980 as part of Alberta's 75th Anniversary, the Goodwill Society held a 'Homecoming' on the first weekend in August. Over 400 people attended this three-day function, which was probably the largest crowd the hall has ever accommodated. The awards that were handed out were:

1. The oldest Lady: Mrs. M. Mitchell
2. The oldest Man: Mr. Dick Jackson
3. Guest from furthest away: Mrs. Irene Gabler (nee Reeves)
4. Family still on original land: Myland Mitchell's
5. Largest Family Group at Homecoming: Grahams
6. Person that was raised, married and stayed in Blueberry, and still here, with family still here as well: Helen Morrison (nee Reeves)

Rev. R. Davidson who laid the cornerstone for Munro Presbyterian Church in 1949, and who preached the dedication service in 1951 when the building was completed, returned to take the Homecoming Service in the hall on the Sunday afternoon.

Through the years the hall has been used for many different things: Dances, Binges, Concerts, Movies, Meetings, Parties, Badminton, Square Dancing, Funerals, and Sunday School. There are



Blueberry Hall in original location.



Ladies Group — Goodwill Club, 1938.



Goodwill Club Mtg. at Nurse's Cottage, 1950.



Goodwill Club Group, 1946.



"Homecoming" people, 1980.



Aerial View of Blueberry Corner, 1959.



Histories on display at "Homecoming".



Blueberry Mtn. Hall, after move.



Blueberry Hall, 1980.



Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Bernard (Early settlers).

even some people in the community who remember having their tonsils out, at a travelling clinic that operated out of the hall. It would be impossible to remember all the wedding dances and anniversaries held in the hall, but two couples that stand out, are Len and Helen Morrison, and Mae and Harry Howell. Both of these couples celebrated their weddings and their 25th Anniversaries in Blueberry Hall. It is certainly safe to say that the hall and the Goodwill Society have served the community well.

History of St. Marys Greek Catholic Church at Ksituan

When the first settlers came to this area and were settled they knew they needed a place of worship. They had mass occasionally in private homes, but that wasn't the answer.

In 1938 they got together and started to build a little church which served the community quite well, but in 1972 tragedy struck the community when during an electrical storm the church was struck by lightning and it burned down. Later in 1972 a new church was built, a much more modern structure, with power and forced air heating.

Some of the cantors who led the congregation in singing were John Solomiany from Whitburn, one of

the first ones, then there was Fred Yanishewski, Matt Hrychan, and Art Woronowski.

The children had catechism during the summer holidays. The sisters would come out from Edmonton and would spend two to three weeks with the children. Now they have summer camps where the different parishes all get together.

There have been over a dozen pastors who said mass at this church, and the ladies from the Parish are quite active and cater to many functions.



Old Church — St. Mary's, 1938.



New church, 1972.



Building new Ksituan Hall, 1936.



Communicants at old church.



Blessing the new church.



Father Shinduke and parishioners.



Catering ladies.

Moonshine Lake Park

Moonshine Lake was a small mint-scented slough for many years, a detour on the old Moonshine Trail, so-called because of the vocation of some of the settlers along its course . . . There is a story that Jack Campbell and Harry Hanrahan, well laden with product, were pulling up the steep incline on the northern edge of the pot hole, when some of the brew was tipped out and ran back down into the pond, thereafter designated as "Moonshine Lake".

However that may be, it did not resemble a lake very much. The grasses always grew lushly there, and when our children accepted the open invitation to roll in them, the afore-mentioned spices would be released. The trees standing sentinel about the spot were some of the most scenic in the area, and probably the reason it was a favorite picnic spot for the Bird family, often joined by the Esselinks. At any rate, at that time, about 1956 or '57, Moonshine Lake **Park** became a figment of the imagination.

Jack Bird, George Esselink and Lawson Scott who lived close by the lake site, interested local residents Jim Paish, Mike Boyko, Andy Clarke, Roy Keyser, Clarke Vanderford and some others, formed a local association for the promotion of the park, each donating \$100.00. Tickets were sold at two dollars a piece to other interested (or even disinterested) locals and the lordly sum of \$384.00 was raised by that means. It wasn't safe to go into the store unless well braced to resist ticket sales.

Other means were also used to raise money. One very popular one was Sunday skating parties on the small pool of water — music supplied by Bird's P.A. system from a truck. Lunch was sold, and the profit from the same went into the fund.

With these funds and other local help, the top-soil was pushed into two "islands" in the eastern end of the proposed lake and the outlines of the lake established. Jim Paish cleared the land for the ball-park, and the park itself was underway.

In the meantime A. O. Fimrite, who was the Social Credit MLA for the area, had been contacted and was interested in the project. There was no other provincial park in a radius of 50 miles or better, and Jack Bird could be very persuasive. Finally Moonshine Lake Provincial Park was established in April 1959 by Order in Council 592/59. At the time of its establishment the park was designed to serve an area south of the Peace River, east to the Little Smoky River and west to the B.C. border. As it turned out, a



Moonshine Lake Beginnings.

very large number of people from Dawson Creek, B.C. and Grande Prairie became regular tourists.

It should be stressed here that the park was originally created for and maintained by the residents of the area, and was a real unifying force. The Moonshine Lake Athletic Association was organized on June 29, 1960 and the directors from each district appointed — Bob Hampton from Blueberry, James Paish from Ksituan, Derek Richards from Blueberry Creek, Graeme Thomlinson from Whitburn, Joe Keyser from Spirit River and Myron Rude from Fourth Creek. This Board built a concession booth close to the southern edge of the lake which ladies of the district ran, each community sending down a deputation for each summer Sunday. Manning the booth itself was actually quite a popular sport, as the booth was busy and afforded a means of seeing most of the area residents. It faced on the lake so had a



Swings at Moonshine Lake.

good view of the boating and water skiing allowed then, and was extremely busy at the end of each baseball game.

The most familiar face at the booth from 1965 to 1972 was that of Dorothy Paish who more or less took charge during those years and donated much time and labor, and found it also allowed her pleasant surroundings and interaction with her family there. Arletta Hampton took over for 1974, '75, and '76 with her family being her back-up support.

In the meantime, Red Cross Swimming and water safety classes had been organized and carried out almost exclusively by Jack Bird. This was a task that took many hours out of every summer, since it included the registration of and arrangement of class-



At Moonshine Lake: Susie Kozij, Anne Hrychan, M. Scott, M. Richards, and Grace Cramer.

es for many hundreds of swimmers and it was also quite difficult to secure qualified swimming instructors who would come out to the “wilds”. Quite a few of them had to be domiciled at the Bird home in order to effect this. The first instructors, and very notable ones, were Max and Ross Jones, Australian school teachers at Spirit River, who conducted the lessons for 1962 and 1963, and who put approximately 150 pupils through their various classes in each of those years. In later years some of the children who had taken all or most of their classes at the lake had become qualified instructors themselves, and gave the lessons, though by 1976, the last year lessons were given, there were only 69 students in the program. Pleasant summer holidays were enjoyed by many families taking in the swimming lessons, although there were times they seemed to guarantee the coldest weather of the summer.



Moonshine Lake, 1963.

And then, of course, there were the ball games. A league was formed, with teams from Silver Valley (Schooners), Fourth Creek (Flyers), Blueberry (Bombers), Spirit River and Rycroft, and games were played every Sunday and various evenings of the week, winding down to “play-offs” in August. Fourth Creek over the years was most often the winner, but everybody had fun, especially the fans. The games have always been well attended and certainly the ball park has to be the most scenic one in the entire Peace River Country.

Back to the government end of our “people park”. In September of 1959 a contract for the construction of a dam on the lake was awarded to R & H Construction of Edmonton, for \$6,502.00. (The H part of that company was Jim Hale who moved here afterward and is still with us). The dam was completed the next year with Len and Helen Morrison doing all the packing with their tractor. This dam raised the size of the lake from 35 acres to 80 acres. The Department of Highways also completed the

building of the last four miles of road to the park . . . In 1963 a mechanically operated gate was installed in the east end to control the level of the lake. As well, picnic sites were cleared, and shelters installed.

Lawson Scott who had been one of the early promoters of the lake became chief foreman for both summer and winter works (which provided much needed employment for local residents). He became warden from 1960 to 1967, and there could never have been another who would put more heart and care into the project. Bob Hampton was assistant park warden, another big plus.

In 1961, about 30 acres were underbrushed, a boat pier built, boat launching sites gravelled. In 1962, 5 more acres were underbrushed, and two change houses built . . . In 1964 much more clearing was done, and out-houses raised to toilet bowl status. 1964 also had to be a low ebb (literally) in the history of the lake. It had been drained and cleaned and in the words of the Moonshine Lake Athletic Association “was too dry in the spring to be used for anything, and then it never quit raining in the summer, so could not be used either”. It rained enough that summer to fill at least six lakes the size of Moonshine. 1965 marked the beginning of fish planting in the lake, and these fish increased in size until 1968 the lake was treated with chemicals to kill the jack-fish which were beginning to be prevalent. Thereafter rainbow trout planting began and has continued since. In 1965 an administration area was marked out and cleared and work begun on it. Electricity came in 1966. That year also marked the first drowning incident — a Phillipine exchange student.

Frank Lindsay took over Lawson Scott’s post in November of 1967, and had to move into the shop as the residence was not completed. In his term, in 1968, his residence was completed, and a water system installed in the park and administration area. In 1969 the park area was increased considerably and a master planning program undertaken. The under-



Blueberry Bombers, 1980.

brushing, road program etc. etc. has continued to this day, guided by various wardens down to the present popular Dave DeLancey. (as of 1980)

Park policy has changed a great deal over the years and so has even the appearance of the park. The clearing and roadwork have enlarged camping facilities, and these have been transferred to large areas on the north shore — geared to tourist camping. Gone are the cheek-by-jowl camping on the south side, and expectation of seeing hundreds of familiar faces, except possibly at a ball game. Gone is an element of freedom. Even the booth has lost its attraction, tucked away in an obscure corner, and not nearly so well frequented. The real emphasis now is on the tourist trade, not on enriching the area — the principle to which it once was dedicated. Change, bad or perhaps good, depending on the point of view; still the responsibility of us all. It's still a far cry from a mint-scented slough.

Swimming Lessons at Moonshine Lake by Leona Ritchie

Swimming lessons at Moonshine Lake as far as we can put together started in July 1962 and was last taught in July 1976. The lessons were certainly of very great importance to over 50 families of the Fourth Creek — Silver Valley districts in these years. Without them many children would never have been able to swim.

There are many people to whom we can give many thanks for their help and support in putting together these lessons. The Bird family is a first and foremost on the list as through them it was actually brought about. Jack spent many hours organizing and arranging with the Forestry and the Red Cross for camping space and instructors for the lessons. Without him I'm sure it would have never come about. The Birds were also very generous in the cuts they gave the different groups for supplies and many an

evening Jack or Wilma would show up at our camps with special treats like watermelons or ice cream etc. for us all. The support given also from the forest rangers over the years was simply superb. Tenting was free for the Forest Warden and Girl Guide groups and this also was a lesson in Conservation of the Forest, Soil, Water and Wild Life for these young people. The Forestry supplied the tents needed but the stipulation was everything was to be left in the same condition as found and definitely no marring of trees or ground etc. Not to our knowledge can we remember having anyone give us problems in this matter.

The first couple of years Betty Knoot took the girls with Ruby Lofgren as camp cook and camped on one part of the lake shore, Dick Rempel with the boys in another part of the park. Betty Knoot holds herself a gold medal for swimming from Holland so was most helpful to all the kids in their practices etc. and certainly gave so much needed encouragement to those nervous of the water. Dick Rempel was also very enthusiastic and helpful for the boys and each leader took complete control of the discipline of the kids and did fabulous jobs. Without their tireless leadership and encouragement those lessons could never have been so successful. Of course there are so many many people to thank over the years, especially parents who did so much to help set up camp and take it down. The many mothers who cooked at the camp staying the whole week, plus the mothers who were unable to stay but would bring full meals each night for the camp. These meals were usually prepared by two or three mothers each taking turns for certain nights. Some special treats like fresh fried chicken (a Ruby Lofgren specialty) or the strawberries which Mary or Ruby Fox brought out each year were especially remembered and so appreciated.

The years 1968-71 were especially full years when we registered around 50 kids each year. Then of course there were the other families camping at the lake for the purpose of swimming lessons too. These came as far as Grande Prairie to across the River at Worsley etc. Mothers and many adults also signed up for lessons.

A few yearly rituals were — Charlie Fox always celebrated his birthday at the camp and usually the candles were match sticks, and of course Charlie was always in for the usual bumps. Another yearly event was our visit from the Chief Warden, George Brewster. He was always thrown into the lake, cowboy boots and all, however he always brought his old pair for this occasion.

The camping at the lake not only included swimming — the kids also went on hikes and did learn about forest conservation and wildlife. Plus the fun



Camping Days at Moonshine Lake.

times of water fights, tents brought down in the night and a variety of games etc. There were the “Not so Fun” times too especially caused by Mother Nature — white caps on the water, days and days of constant rain, severe sun burns and bug bites. However, lessons went on just the same and for sure the kids will remember all. One year we believe it to be the summer of 1970 when it rained the two weeks prior to lessons the roads were so bad there was only one good set of fast deep ruts to travel in to get to the lake. However, most made the trip and helped put up tents on very soggy ground. Lessons and kids were ready and everything went as scheduled.

Another person most worthy of mention is Miss Ferrier — she was most anxious to see the kids of this area be able to receive these lessons too and she spent many hours at our camps telling her many tales and also doing a little spying on the kitchen crew to be sure everything was hygienic. One little incident is much remembered in the first years over a can opener. One of the mothers was opening a can of soup with a slightly rusty can opener. Miss Ferrier took it away and exclaimed how unsanitary this was and threw it in the garbage. However, since it was their only can opener it was retrieved from the garbage, washed and reused.

I’m sure there are many more tales could be told. Certainly lots of thanks go to many people from all who were recipients of these lessons and the good times that everybody involved had, at ‘ye olde swimming hole’.

Poem

by Paul F. Barnett

I may never see tomorrow;
There’s no written guarantee,
And things that happened yesterday
Belong to history.

I cannot predict the future,
And I cannot change the past,
I have just the present moment;
I must treat it as my last.

I must use this moment wisely
For it soon will pass away,
And be lost to me forever
As a part of yesterday.

I must exercise compassion,
Help the fallen to their feet,
Be a friend unto the friendless,
Make an empty life complete.

I must make this moment precious,
For it may never be
Content with things that might have been,
But now have passed away.

Kind words I fail to say this day
May ever be unsaid.
For I know how short may be the path
That lies ahead.

The unkind things I do today
May never be undone,
And friendships that I fail to win
May nevermore be won.

I may not have another chance
On bended knee to pray
And thank my God with humble heart
For giving me this day.

I may never see tomorrow,
But this moment is my own.
It’s mine to use or cast aside;
The choice is mine alone.

I have just this precious moment
In the sunlight of today
Where the dawning of tomorrow
Meets the dusk of yesterday.

Post Office and Routes by Wilma Bird

When the settlement began, Mr. and Mrs. Milldrum’s homestead was the centre of the community. Anyone going to town brought back the mail and Mr. Milldrum and his family sorted it. When people called for it, it was ready. In 1924 Mr. Milldrum was named postmaster of Blueberry Mtn. P.O., and his daughter was assistant. Mail went in and out once a



Mr. Milldrum, first Blueberry Postmaster.

week. The first mail carrier was W. H. McCullough.

The post office was moved to the store in 1946, to Mr. McClusky who had it for one year before the store and post office were transferred to Jack Bird. Harry Hawrylenko hauled mail by every means necessary in those days — horses, tractor or pick-up, from 1949 to 1961, twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays. Mike Kolosky had the mail run from Blueberry to Gordondale, picking up the mail for Whitburn and Gordondale, at Blueberry Mtn., where it had been brought from Spirit River.

Mrs. W. L. Scott had the post office at Whitburn from 1929 (when mail was brought in once a week by Herb Keebler), until September of 1967.

In May 1964, a rural route was established between Spirit River and Blueberry, with Norman Fitzsimmons making the run three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. In 1967, when Whitburn post office was closed, the route was extended to cover that area.

Mr. and Mrs. John Waknuk maintained a post office at “Ksituan” from 1935 to 1964, and Mrs. Jim Pack and the Zyllas had “Poplar Ridge” from 1949 to 1958, when the post office burned and was not replaced.

Mrs. Scobel took over the post office in Silver Valley in July 1970, and then in May of 1971 she did the runs on a new Rural Route extension, picking up mail which was left at Blueberry Mtn. by the courier from Spirit River. This had been Norman Fitzsimmons route, but Alex Babiuk started to relieve for Norman in 1970, and the same worthy gentleman took over the R.R. #1, in 1974, continuing to this day (1980).

In the meantime, the mail which had been delivered to the old Blueberry Mountain corner for thirty-three years at the old stores there, was moved to two miles west to the new store, run by Graham Bros. The Blueberry Mountain post office was then back to a very short distance from where it had first originated. I have operated the post office for 26 of those years, and have handed out mail to most of the new

homesteaders in Fourth Creek and part of Silver Valley, as well as the older customers at Blueberry, most of them looking for love letters or checks! When I was trying to raise a family, and work part time in the store, it seemed it was a task that often involved long hours into the night, paid little, and seemed much more of a chore than a joy, but it certainly has been a means of meeting so many people of this district. Since the rural routes took over, the work has been lighter too, and now I say, “It was good to have been here”!



Makeshift Post Office after Fire, 1973. Murray, Wilma and Colleen.

History of Munro Presbyterian Church, Blueberry Mtn.

Mr. and Mrs. Rod MacDonald moved to Blueberry Mtn., in 1934 from Whitewood, Saskatchewan. Before marrying Rod MacDonald when he returned from overseas at the end of World War I, May had been a resident of Brandon, Manitoba, and had been active in the Presbyterian Church there. When they moved to Blueberry Mtn. there was no church, and May was instrumental in starting the Presbyterian Church there in 1936.

Miss Gregor, a Deaconess, and Rev. Atkinson travelled the 43 miles from Wanham to Blueberry by horse and buggy to hold services when neighbors gathered first at the MacDonald home, then in the Community Hall. The first Presbyterian student minister was R. D. A. Curry who served in the summers of 1938 and '39. He was followed by a long list of students who served in the summer months. A saddle horse was bought by the congregation, and “Brownie” was used by many students to get to the



Mickey Scott at Whitburn Post Office.



Laying Cornerstone, 1949

different charges. Later a bicycle was used, and when "Brownie" was finally sold, the money was donated to the building fund of the Deaconess School, Ewart College, in Toronto. During the winter months services were taken intermittently by ministers from Wanham, and Grande Prairie, and Rev. A. McSween was the first minister to hold winter services on a regular basis and take Communion Services.

In 1948, a meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Graham with sixteen members present, to discuss the possibilities of building a church. Rev. J. A. Munro was present, and gave suggestions for financing the project. The cornerstone was laid in 1949, and in 1950 Mr. A. Legatt of Grande Prairie was in charge of the erection of the church when Work Bees were held and members and adherents worked under his supervision. The Dedication Service was taken on July 29, 1951 by Rev. R. A. Davidson, when June Graham, Marjorie Jeffery, Clifford Richards, Brian Thomlinson and Pat Kennedy were baptized.

In 1954 Rev. Don L. Campbell was married and

took up residence in Wanham. He served the Wanham and Blueberry Mtn. charges till 1961, with the assistance of students in the summer months. When the Campbells left Bill Nesbitt came to Wanham as minister and also served the two charges till 1963, with R. Hill, and Paul McKinnon of Dawson Creek taking the pulpit when there was a break in the continuity. Harold Grove took over in 1964 and stayed till 1968, when once again Dawson Creek filled the vacancy with Angus McGillivray taking the services. Angus McGillivray left Dawson Creek in 1971, and Cam. Bigelow from Grande Prairie finished out the year and part of 1972, until Ken Innes came to Wanham. Ken stayed till July of 1975, and the United Church minister in Spirit River, Charles King filled the gap till Donna Riseborough came in 1976.

While Harold Grove was minister, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church was Dr. J. Alan Munro in 1966, and the following is the story of Munro Presbyterian Church as told to the Roving Reporter for the Grande Prairie Herald Tribune in January of that year:

"Back in the late 'forties, it was as Superintendent of Western Missions that Rt. Rev. J. Alan Munro shared the struggle to establish a Presbyterian Church at this centre of the 'homesteading country' that spreads west from Spirit River to the B.C. boundary.

On Sunday, January 23, 1966, as moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada — the third largest Protestant denomination in the nation — he returned to preach the sermon to an overflow congregation of 125 at Munro Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Munro, who was touring the far-flung Peace River Presbytery which extends as far north as Whitehorse, admitted a sentimental attachment for Blueberry's 'homestead' church. The church was named after him — a tribute to his role in getting it established.



Student minister transportation "Brownie".



Munro Presbyterian Church.

National Church Head Visits Church In Homestead Country



HT, REV. J. ALAN MUNRO, of Toronto, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, made a sentimental journey Sunday back to the church at Blueberry Mountain which he

helped build 19 years ago and is named after him. The church serves the homestead country which spreads west of Spirit River to the B.C. boundary. Dr. Munro is pictured



at LEFT in front of the church; he is seen at CENTRE with Rod MacDonald, senior elder of the church, and Rev. Harold Grove, of Wanham, who conducts services at the Blueberry



Church. The head of Canada's one million Presbyterians is pictured at RIGHT with ladies of the congregation at a social which followed the service. (Staff Photo)

National Church Head visits Church.

He gave credit to Mr. and Mrs. Rod MacDonald, longtime Blueberry residents, for providing the impetus that resulted in construction of the church in 1950.

The church actually grew out of a Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society branch, founded in the district by Mrs. MacDonald the former May MacEwan, of Brandon, Manitoba.

First church services were held in homes of residents, with Rev. Ron Davidson, then Presbyterian minister at Grande Prairie, and now of Saskatoon, and ministers from other northern centres conducting them periodically.

'I can remember the first service I held in an old hall,' recalled the moderator. 'You had to be hardy to attend church in that hall.'

Dr. Munro's tour of the Peace River Country added mileage to the 110,000 mile schedule "by

plane, car, and foot" he mapped out for his term as moderator."

Dr Munro also visited Nigeria when he was moderator, and was presented with a large inscribed brass plate on that occasion. This plate was, at his request, brought to Munro Presbyterian Church at his death in 1972, and hangs in the church.

Savanna Rec-Plex

On the twenty-seventh of December, 1973, the "Savanna Agricultural Society" received its certificate of organization from the province of Alberta. One hundred and twenty-eight members of the surrounding communities supported this application, with Kay Scobel being the major driving force.

Shortly thereafter, John Bole and Tex Fimrite sketched the Rec-Plex itself. After several rough drafts and much discussion, Liland Engineering of Sexsmith was given a rough draft of the building and was asked to draw up the blueprints. This led to a very basic problem — money! The finance committee was formed and government grants were applied for. These grants were based on community contributions but this presented no problem.

In December of 1974 Dwayne Frostad operated Bob McCullough's D-8 and cleared the site. In the spring of 1975 John Craik and Roy Armagost dug the basement with their cats plus they piled brush and placed the culvert. During April and May of the same year 57 loads of gravel were hauled to the site by ten farmers. Then three loads of cement were trucked in from Dawson Creek. In May, 627 hours of volunteer labor were chalked up in the pouring of the basement



Presbyterian Congregation, 1946.



Rec Plex under construction.

At the same time, well over two thousand dollars of equipment use was donated. A Local Initiative Program continued throughout the summer and the project was "off the ground."

In November, volunteers moved gravel into the basement and levelled it in preparation for the basement floor. At the same time, Ray Teghtmeyer levelled the rink area. On November 19, 1975, a work bee chalked up another 280 hours on the rink itself. Dan Friesen and his crane were invaluable when it came to lifting rafters into position on the skeleton structure. Volunteers now prepared the building for the cement blockwork. The roof was shingled in 1976 and work continued on the building itself with 882 volunteer hours being donated in assisting Arnold Coons and Marvin Friesen with carpentry.

On January 6, 1977, Tex Fimrite, Claude Fox and Roy Armagost hauled the furnace et al to the site. Jim Hindmarch hauled the windows. Ray Teghtmeyer hauled the insulation. Two hundred sixty-two hours of labor were donated. From February to June, men were hired on another L.I.P. program; during July and August students were hired on a Young Canada Works program, and during July to October adults were hired on the Canada Works program. During December 1977 to February 1978 the arena itself saw



Rec Plex finished.

completion. Jim Hale provided continued foremanship during these programs, and until the building saw completion.

Throughout this time, Frank Spurgeon continued avid support. Grant Notley, our MLA, continually assisted us in grant applications and presented us with a cheque for \$50,000.

Without strong community support, this dream would never have been realized. Thanks!

Sawmill Activities

by Wilma Bird

The Blueberry Mountain area had its first sawmill in 1928, owned by George Pring. It was located between the old Blueberry Mtn. road and Moonshine Lake, and operated for two years. At that time the stumpage fee was \$3.00 per thousand board feet, and a settler would do his own logging and deliver the logs to the mill. Mr. Pring would charge \$5.00 a thousand for sawing the logs into rough lumber. Besides the custom sawing, the mill produced lumber for sale at \$11.00 to \$12.00 per thousand, for those who could afford it. Many of the homesteaders houses were roofed and floored with Pring's rough boards.

In 1930, John (Unk) Cramer set up a mill along the Blueberry Mtn. road, on what was known as "Applesauce Hill". He also purchased a planer, so in 1931 siding, shiplap, and flooring were available. He operated there for about five years, and then moved the mill to the corner north of the store, where he sawed and planed the lumber for the Blueberry Mtn. Hall in 1937. In 1942-4 Dan Galbraith operated a mill west of Blueberry on Scotty Young's farm. He then moved it to Applesauce Hill to take advantage of fire-killed timber resulting from a spark from the cook-house at the Spinney mill near Moonshine Lake in 1945. This fire burned a narrow strip along the south side of the timber for a distance of approximately three or four miles.



B. Cramer with load, 1943.



Clearing for Logs — Spinney's Mill.

The mill at Moonshine Lake was owned and operated by Spinney (using timber from a berth that had been purchased by Jim Sedore), and it started operating around 1944. Later this mill was sold to Park Bros., who continued to cut Jim Sedore's berth until 1950.

Meanwhile Galbraiths, and many other small mills operated in and around the Blueberry Mtn. timber area. Some of these belonged to Bill Melenchuk, Karegas, Pete Paish, Konashuks, Bill Kosowan, Mike Boyko, Sid Sopko, and Bilawchuks. At the west end of the timber were Oilunds, Fitzpatrick's, Bill Rotacker, and Swansons.

In the '30's lumber could be planed at Cramer's mill for \$3 a thousand. Nick Letersky also had a planer that he operated for thirty years, from 1940 to 1970 charging \$3.00 per thousand at first, and later raising the price to \$5.00. He never hired labor, but whoever was having lumber planed, supplied the necessary help. There were also some small shingle mills in use from time to time. Dan Galbraith sawed the shingles for the Blueberry Hall and they kept the weather out until very recently when metal roofing was applied.

Logging gave rise to numerous trails throughout



Logs Loaded.



Manual Labour — Sawing.

the area which often also served as roads. In the early days logging was mainly carried out with the use of horses, but later cars and trucks used these same roads for travel.

In the late '40's Jack Bird ran a lumber and pulpwood camp. He shipped pulp from Spirit River by rail, employing quite a number of local residents, and also sold lumber through the store he had recently purchased.

In the late '60's some of the larger lumber corporations were threatening to move in to clean up the lumber in this area, but met with organized resistance under the late Jack Bird. Over 300 local farmers met with a delegation from the Alberta Government, forestry officials, and representatives from the said corporations, at Blueberry Mtn. Hall in the summer of 1969. Due to this meeting, a pilot project, unique to Alberta, and even Canada as far as that goes, was engendered. The Blueberry Community Forest was set aside by the Alberta Government under Order in Council 2349/69, in December of 1969, to reserve the forest located on land in townships 79 and 80 in Ranges 8 and 9, west of the 6th Meridian, for the people residing in the Local Improvement District and M.D. 133. The allowable cut on the above forest is set at two million board feet in perpetuity.



Team and Load of Logs.

However, due to there being no facility for the average farmer to log or saw his permits, very little further was done for three years. In January of 1973 Jack Bird heard about the sale of Ken Mitchell's sawmill in the Manning area (Mr. Mitchell having earlier grown up in the Blueberry area, being the younger son of Walter Mitchell) and thought it would be of great benefit to this community. Jack immediately called five people together; each put \$1500.00 in a fund and they purchased the mill. Part of the agreement was that the mill had to be moved by March 30, or the deal was off, and this incurred a tremendous amount of effort and organization. A crew of four men was sent in to dismantle the mill, then River Contractors, operated by Lewis Toews, moved the mill (with great difficulty at times) and then Henry Hessler's cat was hired to clean up the original site. North Canadian Forest Industries was left in sole possession of the timber in the vacated area, to the exclusion of any other private interests — as it might most assuredly have been in the Blueberry Mtn. countryside, had it not been for the monumental efforts outlined above. The total cost of purchasing the mill, tearing it down and moving it to Blueberry Mountain was \$13,691.15.

The five originators of the venture were Jack Bird himself; Rex Carpenter, a farmer in the district; Mike Dika, a farmer and manufacturer of farm machinery in the Rycroft district; Charles Grubisich, owner-operator of Central Peace Dairies in Rycroft; and John Craik of Silver Valley.

John Craik was a homesteader who had previously spent the best part of his life actively engaged in running sawmills in different areas of the three western provinces, and he now threw himself unreservedly into the establishment of this mill. Jack Bird died in August of 1973, and Fred Horn of Spirit River took over his place.

The mill was moved on site and the business of setting it up started on December 27, 1973. Under

winter conditions and much more than average snowfall, it took until Feb. 26, 1974 to complete the job to the stage where the mill could be started up on a trial run . . . The mill has functioned every winter since, employing local residents.

It was the intention of the original founders to turn the mill over to the community at large, and so the "Blueberry Mountain Forest Mill" became the "Blueberry Forest Products Co-op. Ltd." in 1974, and shares were purchased by the public. The area involved has also been enlarged.

Other men whose efforts should be appreciated are Fred Horn and Mike Dika, who did much of the organization of the project. Mike Dika was president from 1973 to 1978, and Fred Horn was secretary treasurer from 1973 to 1980. Both men gave much time and their office space. Rod Graham became president in 1978, and Larry Craik became secretary treasurer in 1980.

The mill has survived many vicissitudes but has produced superior lumber, besides providing employment for local residents, and now, as of 1980, appears to be in a stable viable position.

Early Settlers in Blueberry Mountain

The following list of returned men who settled in Blueberry Mtn., after the first World War was submitted by Mrs. Bernard: Dewey Keebler, Bill Tarr, Fred Sills, Al. Grenache, Jack Campbell, Harry Hanrahan, Bill Bordts, Bill McCormick, Bill McCullough, Howard Pegg, Frank Tyler, Andy Ellison, Tom Gillespie, R. Hoggarth, Dewey Bateman, Steve Keay, Rod McDonald, Vic Mitchell, Garry Raeburn, Buck Burrows, Bill Collins, Louis Bernard, W. W. Woods.

A resume of some of the people who have lived in Blueberry Mtn.

by Arletta Hampton

W. W. Woods took up the NE ¼ 28-8 as his homestead. In the mid twenties he made the first radios; one for himself, and for his neighbors, Shorty Collins, Jack Campbell, and Tom Gillespie. They were crystal sets with large earphones. Two coils were on the radio, and by interchanging them, long range stations could be brought in, as well as overseas. Vic Mitchell was the forest ranger at that time, and when he was moved to Peace River, 'Woody' as he was called, became the forest ranger in these parts. He was followed by Howard Pegg as ranger. Mr. James Lomas bought Woody's land, and it was later sold to the Morrisons.

James Lomas came to Blueberry from Japan, having been born and raised in England. He was in



Log Loader.

the import business while in Japan and came here about 1929. As a homestead, he took up the N ½ 21-80 which he farmed for many years. His wife Margaret passed away about 1959, and Mr. Lomas followed in 1974. They were both ardent gardeners.

Charlie Cousins, a bachelor, came into the district about 1928 with George Houston, whom he met when coming in from Edmonton. He worked for George, clearing land, cutting brush, etc., then took up a homestead on SE 20-80. Charlie was a great sportsman, and surprised the district people by swimming across Moonshine Lake after the Park was opened. He trapped during the winter, and in the spring of '69, while out checking traps he never returned. When his dog came home alone the neighbors went looking for him and found his body where he had passed away while making the tour of his traps.

George Houston was an American but he had served in the Canadian Army. He came in with the other veterans, taking up a homestead on the S ½ 16-80. He owned the first motor vehicle in the district, a Dodge sedan. He proved up on his homestead, then left for the States for a few years, returning from Montana in 1928. He farmed until 1932 then sold out to Dodge and Harper of Spirit River. They rented the land to several farmers until the VLA bought it and sold it to Bob Hampton who is still farming it.

Reginald Caterer, a bachelor who came into the district in 1918 or 19. He homesteaded the SE ¼ 17-80 in 1921 then started the first blacksmith shop, on the corner opposite the old store which he ran for a year before selling to Mr. Badiuk. He farmed for many years, then sold his farm on E ½ 25-80 to Dick Esselink and retired to Pouce Coupe, B.C. where he passed away.

Chris Caterer, a brother to Reg. and Jesse, came into the district in later years, living on the farm of Jesse and Margaret. He did carpenter work and built Jesse's house in the '40's when they put the water in. He also helped with the farm work, then moved on to Grande Prairie.

Reg Ellwood came to the district in 1924. He homesteaded SE 19-80-R.7, later giving it up and moving to NE 20-80-R.8. He married Rose Bice of Eaglesham, Alta., and they had a family of four; Jewel, Arthur, George, and Edward (Ted). Reg. moved to Trail, B.C. and worked for a few years, but the lure of the north was too strong, and brought him back to the farm. He sold out to Len Morrison and took another homestead two miles west which he farmed until his death Oct. 1, 1974.

Allan Morrison came from Sexsmith where he had farmed for many years, around 1937. He and

his brothers and sisters had come over the Edson trail and taken up land around Sexsmith. Al. sold out and came to Blueberry, buying the NW ¼ 16-80 from the Burrows and farming it till the early '50's when he sold out to Harry Young. Al moved to B.C. and lived there for a number of years. When he passed away his remains were buried in the Emerson Trail Cemetery.

Mrs. Minnie Albu was a sister of Al Morrisons who lived at Sexsmith for many years. She ran a butcher shop in Rycroft before coming into Blueberry and buying NE ¼ 17-80 in the early '40's. She was a great cook and ran her own farm for many years, retiring about 1964. She passed away in 1975 and is buried in the Emerson Trail Cemetery.

Jim Stone was known as Blueberry's war hero. He came into the district in 1928 to homestead; a bachelor at that time, taking in all the social events, and was a great ballgame participant. He was one of the main instigators in building the Community Hall. He helped build the first Nurse's home in 1934. Jim left in 1939 to join the army where he became a Lt. Colonel, and was well known all over the world. He remained in the services until his retirement.

William Tarr (always known as "Heavy") was born at Harrington, Ontario in 1887. He was a veteran of the first World War, and had been a Sgt. Major with the Railroad Troops. Heavy came to Blueberry in 1919 to take up a homestead, the S ½ 27-80-8. He never found time to marry, but always enjoyed the community gatherings, and was an ardent curler. During the Second World War, he worked on the Alaska Highway. He retired from farming in 1959, sold his land to Len Morrison, moved into Spirit River, and passed away in 1965.

William McCullough was a confirmed bachelor, coming into the district in 1920 and taking up a



H. Tarr, Rod McDonald and Morrison boys in rape field.

homestead on SW 34-80-8. He was a veteran for the American Army, and once he arrived here, he never left the district to anyone's knowledge. He was the first mailman, hauling the mail by pack horse in the early days, from Spirit River to the Milldrum home where the Post Office was located, and he hauled the mail from 1924-28. Mr. McCullough was a staunch Liberal, acting as Returning Officer or poll clerk for many years, and he also served on the school board. He met with an accident on the evening of April 14, 1959, when his tractor turned over pinning him beneath it and killing him instantly. He is buried in the Blueberry Mtn. Cemetery.



Jack Campbell and Bob Hampton.



Mrs. Alice Campbell.

Jack and Alice Campbell. Jack was a veteran, coming into the district in 1919 with the other veterans seeking land. He took up the W ½ 15-80-8. Jack was raised in Ontario before joining the Services. Alice came out from England in 1923 to visit an old friend Mrs. Al Grenache, with whom she had gone to teacher's college. Before the holiday was over she met Jack and they were married. The Campbells farmed for many years until Jack passed away in 1957. Alice rented the land for a few years, then sold to Mr. Berg. She moved to her own quarter, the Lang place, but was only there a year or so when she sold to the Caryk brothers and bought a house in Spirit River. After living there a year or two she retired to New Westminster where she still resides.

Michele Testawich ran a "stopping place" called Cache One, in the early years, about 11 miles west of Spirit River. This was one of the busiest overnight stops on the old trail to Spirit River, when sometimes as many as 100 teams were at the place in one night. The freighters depended upon Michele to supply them with the feed their animals needed. The stopping place was well equipped, with cook stoves, heaters, and double bunks filled with hay. The freighters did their own cooking. The Testawiches had a family of six; Ernie, Jack, Mike, who have all passed away, Bill and James living in Dawson Creek, B.C., and a sister Mary (Gilgan) living somewhere in B.C.

Sam Henderson was in the R.C.M.P. at one time, then served in World War I. While in the Forces, he was Heavy Weight Champion Wrestler, and had many medals and ribbons he won for wrestling. He came into the district with Jim Sedore and worked in the logging business for many years. When the camp closed down in 1954-55 he stayed on, and spent his retiring years living in the bush alone for 10 years or more, about 2 miles from



Sam Henderson.

Moonshine Lake. He then moved closer to the settlement for 3 years before going into Central Park Lodge where he passed away.

Bill McLeod (well known as Mac McLeod) ran a stopping place 17 miles west of Spirit River. He also ran a little side business of brewing moonshine which was reported to be a very superior type. The road travelled by the settlers when going to town, skirted the present Moonshine Lake, and came to Mac's place further on. From this, the trail became known as Moonshine Trail, and the lake as Moonshine Lake. In the summer of 1925 or 6 Mac closed his stopping place and lived in Blueberry for awhile, then left for his native New Jersey.

Deome Miskinach was a Beaver Indian from the North Peace district, and lived south of the old store for many years. He worked for the farmers during harvest time, and trapped in winter. Mrs. Deome, as everyone called her, made many of the buckskin jackets, mitts, moccasins, etc., for the settlers to buy or trade. Deome passed away many years ago, but Mrs. Deome lived to be nearly 100 years old. She had moved to Dawson Creek with son Dan about ten years ago, and passed away about 1979. They had a family of four; Lee, Archie and Dan, and a daughter Jean (Keebler).

The Burrows came into the district in 1919 from southern Alberta, and homesteaded the N.E. ¼ 16-80-8. They sold out to Sammy and Isobel Kirkland in the early 40's and moved to the west coast.

William Bordtz was a veteran from W.W. I, coming in with the other veterans and taking up the east half of 10-80-8. He and his wife Minnie had a family of three children; Bill, Betty, and Roy, who were raised in the district and attended the local schools. After farming for many years Bill sold his farm to Henry Esselink.

Lloyd Brett — Lloyd, Stella and daughter Adriene came here from Dewberry in 1953, staying with the Christensen's for a short while until they got their homestead SE 30-80-8. Stella taught school for one year 1953-54. They later sold out and moved back to Dewberry about 1960.

Myrtle Allen was a niece of Al Morrison and Mrs. Albu, coming in over the Emerson Trail as a child. She lived for many years at Sexsmith, then Myrtle and son Charlie came into Blueberry about 1940 to keep house for Uncle Al. Later she kept house for many years for Dave Bozarth. She had two more sons, Martin and David. Myrtle did a lot of sewing for people in the district, making fur coats and jackets out of pelts. She always had the coffee pot on.

Myrtle retired to B.C. Charles passed away a few

years ago, Martin is living at Whitehorse, and David in southern B.C.

Blueberry Mountain School History by Estella Esselink

Miss Jean Walker opened school in 1929. Among those early students were Roy Collins, Bertha Grenache, Marjorie and Myland Mitchell, a Winniandi, Testowich, Skoworodko, Phillipchuk, Konashuk. The first classes were held in a log building on the road allowance, built by the settlers for social gatherings. Its windows were small, its walls draughty.

The new school built in 1937, on land donated by Mr. Dewey Keebler, had plenty of windows and a big barrel heater, but as I sat in the teacher's desk, I could see cracks of daylight through each wall. The children attended faithfully and worked hard, and a strong bond existed between teacher and pupil. Credit is due the School Board who did the best they could with scant funds. A handyman was on call to fix a broken window or build a cupboard. Parents rallied to pay the four dollars per quarter school tax. Teachers labored to serve pupils and community.

Some of these children had never seen a train or been to a town. The Provincial Government arranged for a certain number of pupils to travel to Edmonton to see King George VI and his Queen Elizabeth, who were touring Canada. Three Blueberry Mountain youngsters saw the King and Queen, and much more.

When a new teacher arrived, she was taken to all the homes who wanted to board the teacher, and she had to choose her boarding place. The people were so great, giving of their best. This new area had many single farmers. Some teachers, and nurses also, married them, and their children attended this school.

Summer school was the custom during those early years. In 1939 school closed for holidays the end of June and began the regular September to June sessions that year. The trend started towards larger



Stella — new school teacher.



School Interior — Blueberry Mtn.

divisions and consolidation, with busses for conveyance. The early pupils walked miles, or rode a horse to school. Occasionally a faithful dog would pull a small sled to bring a young master to school. More affluence brought bicycles. Now, 1980, along with busses, many high school students, drive their own car.

Wages were at a minimum in 1939 and prior to that. During war years, industry was more lucrative, and the resulting shortage of teachers led to willing persons supervising correspondence lessons. Post war years brought an increase in wages and a return to the profession. Over the years the school house was sided, lined, and painted. A teacherage meant the teacher no longer travelled with roads or weather good or bad, though cooking and eating alone was not that much fun.

Alberta's Fiftieth Jubilee was celebrated with a school party. We planted a spruce tree on either side of the school gate. One of these trees still survives as a memorial to the occasion.

Traffic rules were being taught. Green meant it was safe to go. Red meant to stop. Next day a little boy rode his white pony into the school yard with a big red spot painted on its rear.

Winter sometimes found happy youngsters coasting down Blueberry Mountain (Howard's Hill) on



March Birthday Celebration 1953.

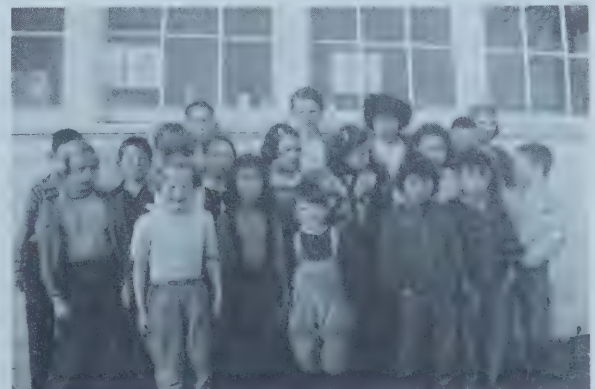
cardboard, toboggan, sled or bottoms. They returned ready to sit for a while. One return from the hill ended in tragedy when two boys crossed the too-thin ice on the dam. Gerald Hanrahan and Buddy Howard drowned.

Christmas concerts provided drama, as well as musical and organizational experiences for students and teacher. The community enjoyed these, contributing generously for treats as well as helping with staging and costuming.

Arbor Day, the first Friday in May, was clean-up day. It ended with a wiener roast, where oranges and sandwiches were toasted as well.

Water was a problem because drilling could not reach any. Ice was stored to be melted for drinking water. One child was heard to remark "Is this drinking water or an aquarium." It is a wonder; but no one became ill from drinking that water, though personally I drank little of it.

The children of those days will remember their beautiful school yard. There they played the games of childhood, built fences, playhouses, etc. Pupils be-



School Groups, 1954.



School Transportation — dogsleds.



School Transportation — bicycles.

came partly your own, as one shares with them the school experiences, and each child leaves an indelible impression. One wishes them well and is forever interested in news of them.

1958 was the last year of school in Blueberry Mountain School Elementary grades are now bussed to Blueberry Creek. High School students attend Spirit River. The building served the Goodwill Club for a short while, then became a Church, and now has its windows boarded up for a granary. It served its time.

Succession of teachers I remember at Blueberry Mtn.

1929-30 — Jean (Walker) Mitchell



School Transportation — buses.

1931-32 — Olive Comber
 1932-33 — Helen (Broadway) Moore
 1934 — Mrs. Wilson Jones
 1937-38 — Irene Shiek
 1939-40 — Estella (Coykendall) Esselink
 1940-41 — Irene Godberson
 1942-43 — Miss Martin
 Olive Holmberg
 Mrs. Carter
 Billy Hopkins
 Nick Shmyr
 Miss Carvell
 Miss Lilge
 1949-50-51 — Mrs. Madge Smyth
 1951-52 — Melba (Pegg) Cyr
 1953 — Joan (Byers) Margell
 1953-54 — Mrs. Stella Brett
 1954-55 — Mrs. Estella Esselink
 1956 — Mr. Marles
 1957 — Wm. Konapelka
 1958 — Mrs. Maxwell

Memories of Blueberry Mtn. School by Irene Shiek

Well I remember arriving in Spirit River near the end of July 1937 after a jolting ride on the stuffy, smelly, mixed train from Edmonton that stopped at every small siding, and shunted and jolted back and forth as freight was unloaded.

I was met by the teacher Miss Yoder who seemed glad to be leaving, and one or two gentlemen who had brought her in to catch the train. Through lunch time I was brought up to date on all the adverse things about the school. I can't remember how we went out to Blueberry Mountain, but as there were only two cars in the district the mode of travel was horseback or "Bennett Buggy". I arrived at Galbraiths, my boarding place, about one half mile from the school, and right across the road from the one-room post office where most of the district gathered on Saturday nights to await the sorting of that week's mail.

The first school morning I had my speech all prepared to start the day and get everyone to commence working, when who should meet me at the door, besides the thirty-five children, but the chairman of the Board and a lady to inspect the children for head lice. Needless to say, my mind went blank. When I called the roll the children were very amused at me trying to pronounce such names as Winniandi, Testowich, Skoworodko, Konaschuk, Phillipchuk and others.

The children looked all neat and clean, but after recess the boys came in dusty and dirty, with clothes ripped etc. Upon asking what they had been doing, they replied, "We were fighting".

Being an avid softball fan, I acquired a bat and softball as soon as possible and went out any noon and recess I possibly could to play ball with them. They loved it. The school was built on the road allowance, so we got permission from Mr. Howard for a small plot of ground across the road. This proved a great asset if you could avoid stumbling on the roots. Soon the whole district was interested in playing ball, and twice a week through the summer evenings we had interesting times at the district ball diamond.

The only drinking water at school was acquired by melting ice in the sun; ice that had been packed in sawdust in the ice house the winter before. What with the heat of summer; the lack of drinking water, and the prolific numbers of mosquitoes that the cattle left behind in the mornings after they sought refuge from them in the school barn through the night, the children found it very difficult to study.

Some of the children, who lived in a new section east of the old district, had so far to walk that they were almost played out when they got to school.

The children were a mixture of races. Two little dark boys who sat together in a double desk, used to sometimes take after each other with their rulers and jabber away in a language I could not understand; tho' I did understand the actions.

I found the children a very loving group, who co-operated in an excellent manner. They appreciated so much anything done for them. A former school teacher (Jean Mitchell Walker) that lived in the district used to bake a great big cake for us to enjoy along with our parties at the school.

When the first cool days of fall made me realize that school would soon be finished for that year because the school was too cold and most of the children lacked the clothes to survive walking so far in the winter I decided the children would profit by putting on a concert. We decided to have this event on Halloween. Great was the excitement with all the plans for decorating, practising pieces for the concert, and arranging everything, for something most of these children had never experienced before. When the big night came the school was packed and everything turned out to be a big wonderful success.

The first year I was in Blueberry I boarded at Dan Galbraiths from the end of July till November. They lived in a log house that had shiplap for partitions, and that let light through the cracks. One night when I returned home, all the rest were in bed, so I crawled into bed without lighting the lamp. Loud was the laughter from the other rooms when they heard me scream and jump out of bed. I thought I had jumped on a snake, but it was a pig's tail from the hog they had killed that day, that Dan had put in my bed.

The next year 1938 I commenced teaching in April and continued till November. I boarded at Bill Lindsays and rode a wonderful Standard bred pony three miles through three gates, and usually made it in thirty-five minutes. Boy! How that horse could trot.

Young Jimmy Lindsay used to meet me at their lane gate every night and bring up the rear down to the barn. He wouldn't eat supper until I got home.

Both these women were marvellous cooks, but I didn't enjoy the water so I drank mostly milk. Galbraiths had one of the two soda water wells in the district, and Lindsays had a dam like most people in the district. A milk pail with a strainer in it, separated the mosquito wrigglers and bugs from the water.

I hold some very fond memories of my pupils in Blueberry Mountain. I remember also the many friends made, the fun we had playing ball, the good dances at Blueberry and Whitburn, the wild strawberry shortcakes, and many other recollections. I would be extremely sorry to have missed this part of my life.

Teaching Days in Blueberry District by Madge Smith

I like teaching, and when we came north in 1947 I wanted to keep on at least until we were better established on the farm. After teaching at Yellow Creek I moved to Blueberry Creek, then Blueberry Mountain, and back again to Blueberry Creek. Our school age children stayed with me, but we had the summers at the farm and also most weekends. We went back and forth with team and buggy, horses and wagon or sleigh, the car, or the truck, as roads and weather permitted. The children even travelled a few times on horseback. The roads weren't very good, especially as we got farther out. One year we lived north of Blueberry Creek, and another year south. The chil-



Blueberry Creek School Picnic.

dren liked this better as they were able to keep a pony, and the dog and cat.

What I remember most vividly was the large enrollment, with most of the eight grades. It was only possible to get in four short class periods with each grade each day, leaving them to work alone a lot of the time. I used work books a lot, and this made it easier for the students when working alone. It also left me large stacks of work books to check each night, as well as getting other work on the blackboards for the next day, so I was kept really busy. The children seemed to like school, and played and worked well together, leaving me no serious discipline problems.

We managed to get a few extra things to use at school. At Yellow Creek we had a second hand phonograph which wound up with a crank, and also a few records. At Blueberry Creek we had a battery charged radio and record player. It still had to be wound, but got better sound from the speaker. We had one of these also at Blueberry Mountain. Many pleasant hours were spent with these, marching or dancing to music, as well as just listening or singing along.

In summer we always had a softball and bat, and sometimes a mitt or a glove or two. This was the main summer activity outside, at noon, recess, and after school — even evenings. Many times the older children and parents came out to play when they weren't too busy. At Blueberry Mountain especially, the children got a lot of good coaching this way from Heavy Tarr, the Pegg boys, Jim Lightfoot, Roy Collins, Mitchells, and Juzwishins. Sometimes we exchanged games with other schools. I remember one time the children walked all the way from Deep Valley to Blueberry Creek — a distance of eight miles, to play a game. Afterwards we had lunch and they walked back again. Later we had school tournaments in Spirit River.

One winter at Blueberry Mountain we bought a

toboggan. The children took it to the hill which was always called Blueberry Mountain. Everybody couldn't ride at once, so we formed groups and took turns going only at noon. I had to ring the bell long and loud, and a little early to give them time to get back. Nobody got hurt, but they did run into a tree once, hitting the corner of the toboggan and making it take sort of a diamond shape. It was easily pushed back and reinforced with a few small bolts.

A festival was held each spring in Spirit River for all schools in the division to compete. A program was sent out listing selections for all the different classes in instrumental and vocal musical selections, as well as choral speech, recitations, plays and drills. We planned to go from Yellow Creek the first year I was there. It was a two day affair so the children saved some money of their own and we earned more with school projects till we had enough to buy our meals at the local restaurant. The children had friends or relatives in town with whom they could spend the night. My family and I stayed with Holmbergs who had a hardware store on the hill at Spirit. We went to the festival with a team and wagon, loaned by Mrs. Kozenko and driven by Harold Chambers. Some parents were afraid of the spring run off, as there was water over the bridge, but it had gone down by the time we crossed. We still had plenty for standing room in the double box. We didn't travel very fast, so some of the boys walked along the ditches picking up beer bottles which they sold in town for spending money.

We didn't win many ribbons, but everyone had a good time. They had worked very hard preparing their numbers, and didn't get to town very often in those days.

Christmas concerts were very important to the school children and to the community then. We started about the first of November to select plays, songs, recitations and drills to suit the children and get everyone involved. We made our own costumes from garments the children brought from home, along with cardboard, tinsel, and much crepe paper. Everybody was busy, making these, making decorations, copying parts, and practising. Much was done during recess, noon, and after school, as lessons had to go on for the most part until near the end when the concert became a full time Christmas enterprise. A stage was put up with the help of some bigger boys or a father, and curtains were fashioned from sheets loaned by some mothers. We tried to set dates so the people from all around could attend the different concerts in the district. Santa was always there to distribute candy bags. Lunch followed, and the lunches were cleared away for the dance that followed.



B. Creek School Picnic under Ksituan Bridge.



Blueberry Creek School.



Students in front of Yellow Creek School 1930's.

I'm sure many people remember some of these good times, and the children, I hope, learned something good about living and working together, as well as the three R's required by the course of studies.

History of Silver Valley School by P. Hessler

This school was built in 1954 on NW¼ 22-81-10-W6. The first and only teacher was Dorothy Smith. The school remained open for three months. Cold weather, road conditions, and distance from the school, forced closure of the classroom. Some of the families represented were: Reays (5 children), Rockwoods (3), Frostads and Derksens (1).

From 1955 to 1958 the school building remained at the original site. It was used for dances, weddings, and other community functions.

In August, 1958, it was moved to Spirit River and formed part of the Spirit River School (where the Spirit River Elementary School is now).

In 1961 the school was moved to the Fourth Creek School yard: (NE¼ 22-81-8-W6). It became part of the Fourth Creek School until 1965. At this time the Fourth Creek School was closed and the school grounds reverted back to Walter Yanishewski, who



Fourth Creek School.

owned the quarter section of land. The Silver Valley School is still in Walter's yard.

Savanna School was built in 1965 and consisted of four classrooms. A list of staff members follows:
1965 Principal — Mr. Rene Joly

Gr. 1, 2 — Mrs. Monica Torgerson

Gr. 3, 4, 5, 6 — Miss Pauline Halikowski

Gr. 7, 8, 9 — Mr. Joly

1966-67 Principal — Mr. Rene Joly

Gr. 1, 2 — Mrs. Monica Torgerson

Gr. 2, 3 — Mrs. Phyllis Hessler/Mrs. Viola Crocker

Gr. 4, 5, 6 — Miss Myrtle Schmidt

Gr. 7, 8, 9 — Mr. Joly

High School Correspondence Supervisor: Evelyn Frank

1967-68 Principal — Mr. Rene Joly

Gr. 1 — Miss Lana Minue

Gr. 2, 3 — Mrs. Viola Crocker

Gr. 3, 4 — Mr. Hubert Sinclair

Gr. 5, 6, — Mr. Desmond Kerr

Gr. 7, 8, 9 — Mr. Joly

High School Correspondence Supervisor: Leona Ritchie

1968-69 Principal — Mr. Robert Myrek

Gr. 1 — Miss Lana Minue

Gr. 2, 3 — Mrs. Viola Crocker

Gr. 3, 4 — Mr. Hubert Sinclair

Gr. 5, 6 — Mr. Desmond Kerr

Gr. 7, 8, 9 — Mrs. Karen Fimrite

High School — Mr. Myrek



Fredlands 25th Wedding Anniversary. — Fourth Creek School.

In 1969 one classroom and a science lab were added to the existing school.

1969-70 Principal — Mr. Bannerjee

Gr. 1 — Miss Lana Minue

Gr. 2, 3 — Mrs. Myrtle Johnson

Gr. 3, 4 — Mrs. Viola Crocker

Gr. 5, 6 — Mr. Desmond Kerr

Gr. 6, 7 — Mrs. Karen Fimrite

Gr. 8, 9 — Mr. Brian Fjeseth

Gr. 10, 11 — Mr. Bannerjee

1970-71 Principal — Mr. Bannerjee

Gr. 1 — Mrs. Lana Fjeseth

Gr. 2 — Mrs. Joan Bole

Gr. 3, 4 — Mr. John Bole

Gr. 5, 6 — Mr. Desmond Kerr

Gr. 6, 7 — Mrs. Karen Fimrite

Gr. 8, 9 — Mr. Brian Fjeseth

Gr. 10, 11 — Mr. Bannerjee

1971-72 Principal — Mr. John Bole

Gr. 1 — Lana Fjeseth

Gr. 2, 3 — Joan Bole

Gr. 4, 5 — Mrs. Dolores Roy

Gr. 5, 6 — Mr. Desmond Kerr

Junior-Senior High: Karen Fimrite, John Bole, Brian Fjeseth

1972-73 Principal — John Bole

Gr. 1, 2 — Florence Fitzpatrick

Gr. 2, 3 — Joan Bole

Gr. 4, 5 — Dolores Roy

Myrtle Johnson

Gr. 5, 6 — Larry Yarmich

Junior-Senior High: Karen Fimrite, Shirley Friesen, John Bole, Brian Fjeseth

In 1973 Savanna School was enlarged again by the new addition of a library and a gymnasium.

1973-74 Principal — John Bole

Gr. 1, 2 — Jean Sommerville

Gr. 2, 3 — Phyllis Hessler

Gr. 4, 5 — Desmond Kerr

Gr. 5, 6 — Larry Yarmich

Junior-Senior High: Karen Fimrite, Peter Gerk, Ted Boyda, John Bole, Lindsay Sommerville/Mr. Clements/Lois Webster

1974-75 Principal — John Bole; Vice-Principal: a Juliann Nahnybida

Gr. 1 — Mrs. Karen Monostory

Gr. 2 — Phyllis Hessler

Gr. 3 — Joan Bole

Gr. 4 — George Monostory

Gr. 5 — Desmond Kerr

Gr. 6 — Julian Nahnybida

Junior-Senior High: Wayne Dick, Gail Dick, Rosemary Nahnybida, John Bole, Mrs. Kathryn Dean, Therese LeVesque

In 1975, the final addition to this date (April 1981) was made to Savanna School. This part consisted of four classrooms: a laboratory; a cafeteria; a library; an administrative area, and a number of small ancillary rooms. An extra building, — known as “the portable” became Savanna’s first kindergarten. Before the 1975-76 school year, “the portable” had been used as a classroom.

1975 also saw our first graduating class.

1975-76 Principal — Mr. Fred Rappell, Vice-Principal Mr. Wayne Dick

Gr. 1 — Margaret Jensen

Gr. 2 — Elizabeth Andruchiw

Gr. 3 — Gail Dick

Gr. 4 — Henry Smith

Gr. 5 — Karen Fimrite

Gr. 6 — Desmond Kerr

Resource Room: Connie Pollard

Kindergarten: Lana Fjeseth

Junior-Senior High: Rick Pollard, Fred Rappell, Mr. Cheeseman/ Frances DuPerron, Wayne Dick, Genel McLean, Judy Rappell, Therese LeVesque

1976-77 Principal — John Bole, Vice-Principal:

Mr. Wayne Dick

Gr. 1 — Mary Rose Baldwin

Gr. 2 — Julie Gregg

Gr. 3 — Joan Bole/Gary Averill

Gr. 4 — Dal Brown

Gr. 5 — Phyllis Hessler

Gr. 6 — Lawrence Dodge

Resource Room: Margaret Jensen

Kindergarten: Holly Pitman

Junior-Senior High: John Bole, Wayne Dick, Peter Gerk, Genel McLean, Richard Deveaux, Eric Keddie, Lois Webster, Karen Fimrite.

1977-78 Principal — Desmond Kerr: Vice-Principal — Wayne Dick

Gr. 1, 2 — Julie Gregg

Gr. 2, 3 — Gary Averill/Donna Nelson

Gr. 4, 5 — Mary Rose Baldwin

Gr. 5, 6 — Lawrence Dodge/Judy Campbell

Gr. 7 — Dal Brown

Resource Room — Margaret Plantinga

Kindergarten — Holly Pitman

Junior-Senior High: Desmond Kerr, Wayne Dick, Eric Keddie, Barry Nelson, Karen Fimrite, Bob Kennedy, Peter Gerk/Vickie Daniels

1978-79 Principal — Desmond Kerr: Vice-Principal — Wayne Dick

Gr. 1, 2 — Julie Gregg

Gr. 2, 3 — Donna Nelson

Gr. 4, 5 — Mary Rose Baldwin

Gr. 5, 6 — Margaret Plantinga

Gr. 7 — Dal Brown

Kindergarten — Holly Pitman

Junior-Senior High: Desmond Kerr, Wayne Dick, Eric Keddie, Barry Nelson, Karen Fimrite, Bob Kennedy

1979-80 Principal — Desmond Kerr; Vice-Principal — Wayne Dick

Gr. 1, 2 — Julia Gregg

Gr. 2, 3 — Donna Nelson

Gr. 4, 5 — Margaret McEachern

Gr. 5, 6 — Margaret Plantinga

Resource Room — Joan Brown

Kindergarten — Holly Pitman

Junior-Senior High: Desmond Kerr, Wayne Dick, Barry Nelson, Mel Mailloux, Eric Keddie, Karen Fimrite

1980-81 Principal — Desmond Kerr: Vice-Principal — Wayne Dick

Gr. 1, 2 — Julie Gregg

Gr. 2, 3 — Thakor Purbhoo

Gr. 4, 5 — Gordon Jones

Gr. 6 — Margaret Plantinga

Resource Room — Joan Brown

Kindergarten — Holly Pitman

Junior-Senior High: Desmond Kerr, Wayne Dick, Barry Nelson, Mel Mailloux, Karen Weiss, Karen Fimrite



Peace River Country's only triplets, Agneta, Jacqueline and Jackie Mollinga, of the Blueberry district, started school today at Blueberry Creek school, nine miles from their farm home. Here, the girls watch in fascination as their brother advances menacingly on a flock of chickens roaming near the children's tent pitched in the farmyard. (Staff Photo)

Twins who were in Blueberry Mountain and Blueberry Creek in 1930

Jean and Jerry Hanrahan

Jack and Amy Esselink

Alice and Gurda Meester

Edna and Evelyn Smyth

Judy and Jerry Smyth

Donald and Douglas Ellison

Wendle and Wayne Waughtel

Winiandy twins (Names unknown)

Philip and Adolph Dzioba

Kathleen and Nellie Dzioba

Katherine Law Kozenko and Elizabeth Law Kozenko, named by their doctor, Dr. Law when they were born in the old Spirit River Hospital.

History of Blueberry Mountain W.M.S. Auxiliary Group

Back in the year 1936 homesteaders were moving onto the land in the Blueberry Mountain area. Among the settlers at that time were Mr. and Mrs. Rod Macdonald and Jim Graham. Homesteading at that period of time meant isolation to a large extent, as the roads were primitive and there were no phones, no electricity, and no modern conveniences.

Mrs. Macdonald had been very active in the Presbyterian Church around Brandon, Manitoba, and felt there was a job to be done at Blueberry Mtn. She was instrumental in starting the W.M.S. Group, and in starting the church, which first met at her home, and later in the Community Hall, before the present church was built.

Miss Gregor was a deaconess at Wanham at this time, and was keenly interested in the Blueberry Group. She travelled by horse and buggy and drove the 43 miles from Wanham to Blueberry whenever possible.

On Friday February 28th, 1936, eleven ladies met at the home of Mrs. Rod Macdonald to observe the World's Day of Prayer. Following the service, Mrs. Macdonald suggested that the ladies form a W.M.S. Group and meet monthly to study Mission Work being done in different countries by the Presbyterian Church.

A meeting was held March 24th at the home of the District Nurse, Miss Janet Munroe, and the Blueberry Mountain W.M.S. Auxiliary Group was formed. Mrs. Macdonald was nominated for president of the group (a position she held for 13 years), and Janet Munroe was named secretary. Other local ladies attending this meeting were Mrs. W. Mitchell, Mrs. V. Mitchell, Mrs. Hewitt, Mrs. Lalonde, Mrs. Bernard, Mrs. Tyler, Mrs. Reeves, Mrs. Meester, and Mrs. McCormick, all neighbors, living within a five



W.M.S. Group, 1940.



Mrs. May McDonald, Founder of W.M.S.

mile radius, who either had to walk to the meetings, ride a horse, or drive a horse and buggy.

The group met monthly thereafter, opening each meeting with Scripture Reading and the singing of a hymn, followed by Mission Study and a Social Hour. The membership fluctuated as ladies came to the district or left the district. Mrs. Bernard was named Supply Secretary, and the group made baby clothes to be given out by the District Nurse. An offering was taken at each meeting and forwarded to Edmonton. Shortly after the group was formed, Janet Munroe was transferred, and Mrs. F. Tyler was named Sec.-Treasurer. She held this position till February 1942 when she moved to Vancouver.

Mrs. Mollinga took over the job of Sec.-Treasurer in Feb. 1942 and held it till Dec. 1960. Mrs. Mollinga died in July of 1963. Mrs. Anne Graham took the position of president when Mrs. Macdonald retired from it in December 1948, and carried on till Dec. 1960.

Mrs. Thomlinson was president from Jan. 1961 to Dec. 1964.

Mrs. E. V. Esselink from January 1965 to 1968.

Mrs. A. Graham from January 1969 to 1971.

The group observed World's Day of Prayer each year, sometimes having guests, and sometimes going to other denominations as guests. The W.M.S. Studies were used at the meetings, and sometimes articles from the Glad Tidings magazine. Each year the group collected for the Red Cross, and each year members attended Presbyterial Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings.

The Peace River Presbyterial was organized in 1949, and Blueberry ladies attended faithfully, and were on that Executive in later years. First president of P. R. Presbyterial was Mrs. R. Davidson, Grande Prairie.

1949 — A W.M.S. Auxiliary Group was organized in Gordondale

1949 — Mrs. Macdonald turned first sod and Dr. J. Munro laid the cornerstone for Blueberry Church Building

1949 — Mrs. A. Graham received a Life Membership in the W.M.S.

1951 — Dedication of Munro Presbyterian Church

1952 — Mrs. F. Jeffery given a Life Membership

1953 — Mrs. Anne Graham to Council, London, Ont.

1954 — Mrs. Macdonald passed away

1955 — Donations towards a Communion Table in Remembrance of Mrs. Macdonald received from Brownvale, Dixonville, and Gordondale

1960 — Mrs. Mollinga to Council

1960 — Mrs. Thomlinson to Training Centre, Regina

1961 — Anniversary Program (\$54 to Anniversary Project)

1963 — Mrs. E. Esselink, key person for Anniversary Pages (Mrs. Macdonald, Mrs. Corbett, and Mrs. Tyler remembered)

1964 — Mrs. J. Richards made and donated a lovely Linen Communion Cloth

1966 — Ladies served lunch when Dr. Munro visited

1966 — Richards family moved away

1967 — Centennial Project (Raised \$64.00)

1968 — Mr. and Mrs. Bernard moved away (5 members left)

1970 — Group hosted luncheon for Moderator Dr. Evans

1971 — Four Ladies left (all on Presbyterial Executive)

1971 — Two more ladies moved away and the Group ceased to exist.

1976 — Mrs. M. Thomlinson to Council

1976 — Peace River Presbyterial met at Blueberry Mtn. in June (last Presbyterial Meeting held)

General Photos of Interest



Blueberry Mountain Hamlet, 1952



D. Bozarth Shop.



Garage and Workshop — South of Hall.



Blueberry Hall S.E.



Nurse's Home and Cafe N.W. Corner.



Birds Store S.W. Corner.



D. Bozarth Blacksmith Shop N.E.

Haying



Hayrake and team.



Stacking Hay.



Load of Hay Bales.



More hay bales.



Haying - Forklift.

Drinking Water Supply



Digging Dam for Water Supply.

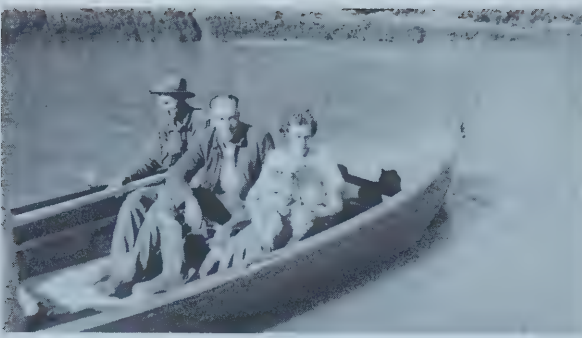


Digging Dam.



Cutting Ice (the Hard Way).

Daily Chores



Boating on Dugout.



Loading Ice.



Ice House, 1941.



Bringing Drinking Water (Ice Blocks on Hand Sleigh).



Going Berry Picking.



Filling the Woodbox — The Daily Chore.



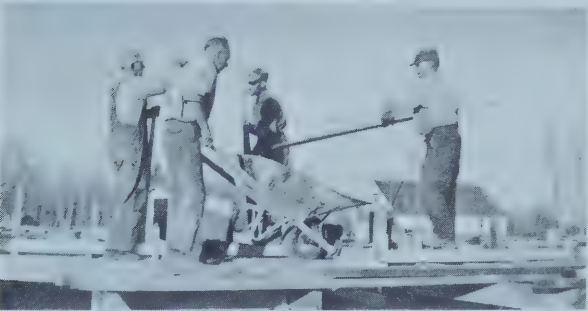
Rumely Tractor.



Transportation by Model T.



Concrete Work — The Hard Way.



More Concrete Work.



School Days.



School Transportation — Ponies.



Transportation by horseback.



Ready for winter outing with team and caboose.

Transportation



Philpott travelling by Dog Team, 1934.

Harvesting



Stooks.



Stooks.



Threshing.



Threshing.



J.D. Clipper Combine.



J.D. 43 Combine.



C.C.I.C. Combine.



Threshing with horses and wagons.



Swath.



Select Grain Plot, 1941.



Cutting with Binder.



Pedigreed Barley, 1959.

Clearing New Land



Haying with Pitchforks.



Breaking with Horses

Livestock



Hauling Rocks.



Belgian Stallion.



Breaking 1930 — Steel Wheeled tractor.



Milking the Cow.



Sheep.



Brown's Farm, 1970.



Mosquito Time (Smudge).



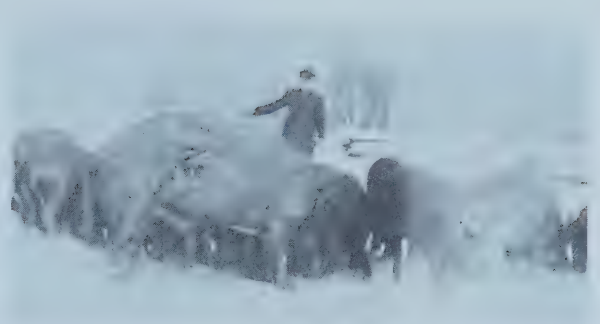
Hereford Cattle.



Bull — Popeye.



Cattle at dugout.



Pigs.

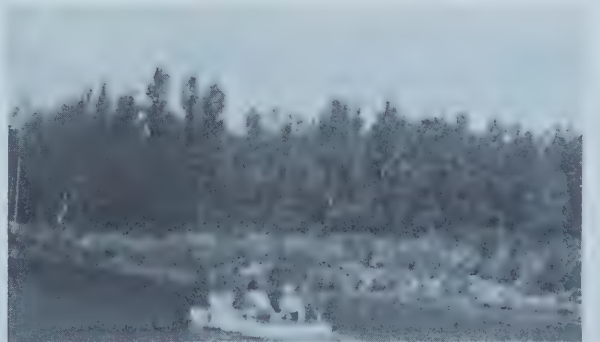


Meat Supply, '38.

Miscellaneous



Fencing the Hard Way, 1944.



Punt on Dugout.



Old Ksituan Bridge, 1950.



New Ksituan Bridge.



Snow Removal.



Moving Snow.



Natural Gas Installation.



Early Travel — Camping en route.



Caravan of Settlers heading for Ksituan, 1929.



Natural Gas Installation.

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